

Independent living: a call to arms

BY PAUL CARTER

Disabled people are being urged to march on Downing Street on Monday, 18 June, to demand government support for a legal right to independent living.

Lord Ashley's disabled persons (independent living) bill would place a duty on local authorities and the NHS to improve opportunities for independent living (IL).

The bill, introduced to the Commons by Roger Berry MP, also aims to cut red tape by ensuring that organisations pool funds, and would give disabled and older people more choice and control over their care and living arrangements.

Mr Berry told *DN*: "We do face a real crisis in social care in the UK that's really affecting

the lives of disabled people and their families."

Lord Ashley said there was a need for "comprehensive legislation" that deals with the problems facing disabled people, as existing law is "inadequate".

He said: "The essence of the bill is that it confers new rights on disabled people and imposes new duties on public authorities that will transform the rights of disabled people, if it gets through Parliament.

"It's a big claim, but I think this bill is the ultimate bill of what we want for disabled people."

Sue Bott, director of the National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL), echoed Lord Ashley's sentiments.

She said: "Although the government keeps saying we don't

actually need an independent living bill because we can just tweak existing legislation, we're strongly of the opinion that we as disabled people need a guarantee of independent living and only legislation can do that."

Andy Rickell, an executive director of Scope, said: "If passed, this bill would create a legal right to the services and support disabled people need for independent living."

Sir Bert Massie, chairman of the Disability Rights Commission, said: "An historic opportunity to reform our threadbare social care system and to liberate millions of families into active, participating and contributing citizens, now exists and should not be missed."

Despite being passed by the House of Lords, the bill is unlikely to become law in this Parliament, as it has yet to win government support.

On 18 June, a rally will take place outside Downing Street, from 12-2pm, and could be one of the first protests Gordon Brown sees as Prime Minister.

Ms Bott said it was imperative that disabled people attend the rally.

She said: "Just staying at home is not going to get the message across, and there are times when you need to take to the streets.

"I would urge anybody who cares about the current crisis and who cares about our need for IL to come to the rally and show their support for the bill."

Lord Ashley said: "Without public support we'll get nowhere, and this is a great opportunity to show support and put pressure on ministers to back it. Public support could change hearts and minds."

Their call comes as research by the Office for Disability Issues suggests investing in independent living, such as housing adaptations and improvements, could make long-term savings to social care budgets.

Independent living: the four words that say it all



DRC/PA/FABIO DE PAOLA

FREEDOM

Since having a stroke, Ian Jacobs can walk only short distances with the aid of a stick. His mobility is severely restricted.

Ian, from Northamptonshire, initially received three visits a day from a care worker for help with personal care and domestic chores. But this was cut to one visit each weekday.

He said: "I can't get my shoes, coat or leg brace on by myself. I don't want to just watch TV and never have contact with the outside world."

He was also refused kitchen aids to help him cook for himself, rather than relying on council "TV dinners".



DRC/PA/MATT FABER

CONTROL

When Beth Keeley moved from Norfolk to Surrey in 2004, her care package wasn't transferred.

Beth, who is blind and has diabetes and arthritis, gave advance warning of her move to both councils.

Even after she gave birth to a son, she still had no care and her son could not get to nursery.

She said: "Care was minimal in Norfolk – basic cooking, cleaning and sleeping.

"As a parent, my needs have increased, but the minimalist Norfolk care package isn't here, let alone help for parenting. Living hell sums up what has happened."



CHOICE

Paul Casey, a wheelchair-user, was forced to live apart from his partner and two children after being denied a disabled facilities grant (DFG).

He met Gillian in 2001 and they bought a bungalow in Croydon with their life savings.

He applied for a DFG to make the bathroom accessible, but the council said he was ineligible, as both he and Gillian had full-time jobs.

Paul said: "We are a family and we want to live together properly as any other family would. It's so frustrating."

Now he travels back every night to his parents' home in Biggin Hill, Kent.



ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

DIGNITY

Clarissa James* became disabled nine years ago. Today she survives on a food budget of £8 a week.

She used to run her own business, but has been living on benefits since a work accident which caused severe head and spinal injuries.

Her council bungalow has concrete floors and no phone, computer, TV or working oven.

Her priority is paying for rehabilitation therapy, much of which the NHS will not fund.

She said: "The benefits system steals every ounce of dignity you have."

*Her name has been changed

**See Poverty Files, page 30

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Councils failing on budget duties

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

More than half the local authorities in London have failed to prove they are assessing how their whole budgets will affect disabled people, according to a new survey.

The survey, carried out by Scope following concerns about funding cuts to disabled people's services and organisations, asked if councils had analysed the impact of their 2007/08 budgets on disabled people.

Only 17 of 33 authorities initially responded. Just four – Merton, Camden, Islington and Lambeth – showed that

"impact assessments" were carried out before budget decisions were made.

And one of these – Lambeth – is now embroiled in a dispute over funding cuts and increased care charges.

Under the new disability equality duty, which came into force in December, councils must assess how their policies and procedures affect the equality of disabled people.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) said it would take the issue to local government organisations "to ensure more consistent use of impact assessments".

A DRC spokesman said:

"Although this is a small survey, it confirms a general picture of local authorities nationwide failing to assess the implication of future revenue and capital spending decisions on disabled people."

"This means that many local authorities will only be aware of negative impacts some time after budgets have been set."

Abigail Lock, Scope's parliamentary affairs manager, said the low response rate showed disabled people were not a priority.

"We have seen evidence of this from the tightening of eligibility criteria for disabled people's services as well as the

cutting back of funding by authorities to many disabled people's groups."

A London Councils spokesman said a DRC clarification of whether impact assessments should be carried out on budgets would be "useful".

But he added: "Regardless of whether or not it is a duty, London Councils believes that it is good practice to carry out impact assessments on all policies and budgets."

"As 2007/08 is the first full year of the duty, we will be advising our members to carry out impact assessments on all future budget planning."

DRC court warnings on equality scheme

Public bodies which continue to flout the law by failing to publish disability equality schemes will face court action, the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has warned.

The warning came as the DRC issued legal documents giving nine offending organisations 28 days to provide evidence that they are taking steps to produce a scheme.

Sir Bert Massie, chairman of the DRC, said: "It's shameful that a minority of public bodies clearly have no regard for the principles of equality or for ensuring their services are geared towards the needs of their disabled customers."

Of the nine organisations which the DRC says face possible court action, one is a museum (Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry), five are councils (Berwick-upon-Tweed, Epsom and Ewell, Hart, the Isles of Scilly and Torridge), two are health bodies (Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust and Tameside and Glossop Primary Care Trust), and one is a college (Barrow-in-Furness Sixth Form College).

ILF data stolen again

Bank account details, national insurance numbers and names and addresses of thousands of independent living fund (ILF) recipients have been stolen, it has emerged.

The personal information of around 30,000 severely disabled people who receive the benefit was taken from a van last September.

The incident follows a theft in December 2004, when tapes with bank details of ILF recipients were stolen from the ILF's head office (DN, February 2005).

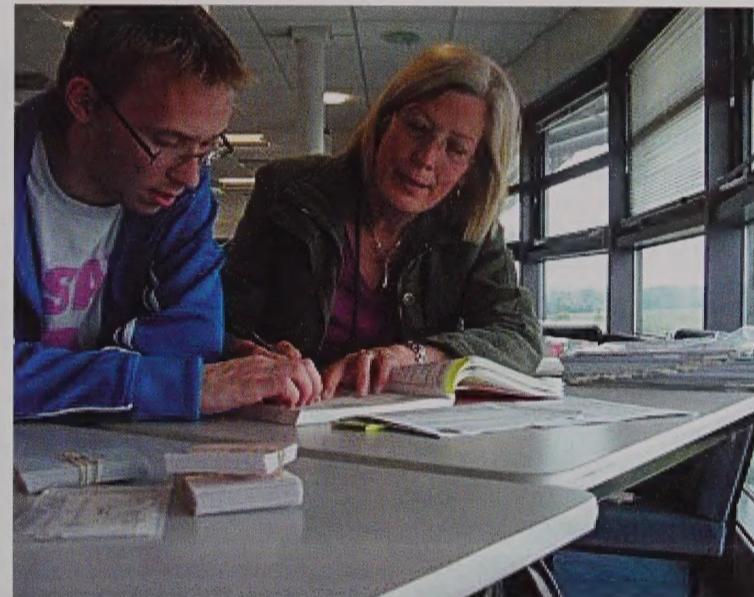
Details of September's theft were released in response to a parliamentary question from the Liberal Democrats' shadow

work and pensions secretary, David Laws.

Disabled people's minister Anne McGuire said ILF trustees had launched a review of IT security and that there was no evidence that anyone had been the victim of identity fraud.

A Department for Work and Pensions spokeswoman admitted there had been a security review after the 2004 theft and that new arrangements had been introduced at the time.

Mr Laws said: "With the increased scope for fraud from ID theft, the government should stop gathering in more data until it can safeguard the information it already has."



Model workers: Disabled college staff are being encouraged to declare their impairments as part of a campaign by unions UCU and UNISON to provide more positive role models for disabled students and staff. Pictured (right) is Sue Cotton, a disabled employee of Isle of Wight College, with a student.

Fine in cannabis pain relief case

DN CAMPAIGN

A woman who used cannabis to ease the symptoms of her arthritis has pleaded guilty to cultivating the drug.

Cannabis eased Mandy Towler's pain so much she needed two instead of eight painkillers a day.

She told DN: "It eased my joints so much. I could not even bend before. I did not feel so achy and I could just relax or do some weeding in the garden."

She received a two-year conditional discharge and an £80 fine.

The Arthritis Research Campaign said: "While we don't condone breaking the law, we believe the courts should take a sympathetic view of people who take cannabis to relieve the pain of arthritis. They should treat them with compassion and not as criminals."



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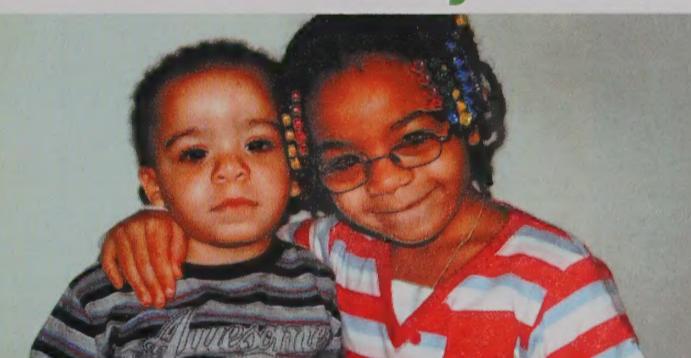


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Leah and Kyle are sister and brother who love one another and have lived together since Kyle's birth. They have lived with the same foster carer since Spring 2006. They enjoy playing happily with one another.

Leah is a clever little girl with a lively sense of humour. She has foetal alcohol syndrome, but since living with her current carer, has made great progress, both behaviourally and developmentally. She enjoys a wide range of activities including drawing, playing with dolls and running around with other children.

Kyle is a cautious little boy who is wary of strangers, though very friendly with those he knows. Kyle loves playing with his toys, particularly kicking his ball around. Kyle shows facial features of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, however there is no evidence of developmental delay.

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Government passes new welfare act

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Disabled people will have to prepare themselves for a revamped benefits system, after the government's welfare reform bill finally received Royal Assent and became law.

The Welfare Reform Act 2007, which aims to move one million people off benefits and into work, was passed into law at the beginning of last month.

The government's welfare reform plans had been at the core of heated debate since a green paper was published in January 2005.

Under the new act, an employment support allowance (ESA) will be introduced in the autumn of 2008 to replace incapacity benefit and disability-related income support.

Disabled people who cannot work will receive a "support component" and those deemed fit for work will get a less generous "work-related component" – but the levels of benefit have not yet been decided.

A new personal capability assessment (PCA) will assess entitlement to benefit. Disabled people deemed able to work must attend work-

focused interviews and other work-related activities, with the government's Pathways to Work programme, via Jobcentre Plus, playing a key role. There are potential benefits sanctions if a claimant fails to participate without good cause.

Vanessa Stanislas, director of Disability Alliance (DA), said it welcomed amendments to the bill, although concerns remained.

She applauded the amendment ensuring that only Jobcentre Plus, rather than private sector organisations, can enforce benefits sanctions.

She is pleased the act requires an independent annual review of the PCA for the next five years, which may resolve any problems with training benefits staff and GPs on how assessments are carried out.

But DA is concerned about benefit levels, details of the PCA and collection of medical evidence, and those disabled people who will not qualify for the new ESA and will have to apply for job seekers allowance. DA also fears there is not enough funding to carry out the government's plans.

Charity warned govt over ballot papers

After thousands of ballot papers were spoiled in last month's Scottish elections, a learning difficulties charity has claimed it warned the government the voting procedure was too complicated.

ENABLE Scotland says it responded to a consultation by the Electoral Commission last August with several recommendations.

Linda Kerr, who runs ENABLE Scotland's information service, said: "There are 120,000 people in Scotland who have learning disabilities.

"We were quite clear that a combined ballot paper would be confusing to many of these people and to countless others.

"It comes as no surprise that so many people failed to understand the voting system."

A Scotland Office spokesman said: "The design of the ballot paper went through a significant consultation process involving political parties, professional associations and special interest groups.

"The ballot paper design will form a significant part of the Electoral Commission's independent inquiry into the Scottish elections."

ENABLE Scotland's claims came as fellow disability charity Capability Scotland launched a new advertising campaign to celebrate 60 years of campaigning success.



Capability Scotland's chief executive Alan Dickson (left) with campaigner Peter Stirling in front of an advert highlighting improvements in access to the voting system, which toured Edinburgh on election day.

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In brief

Two-year waiting list for aids
Half a million people are still waiting for hearing aids on the NHS, some for up to two years, a new report by MPs found.

The health select committee, which produced the report, is calling for extra capacity to cope with the high demand for digital hearing aids.

The committee also wants the government's target of 18 weeks between referral and treatment for consultant-led services to include audiology as soon as possible.

Children lack palliative care
Families struggle to secure adequate palliative care for their children in the face of insecure funding and poorly planned and co-ordinated services, an independent report* commissioned by the government found.

The authors called for a national palliative care strategy for children and young people, which social care minister Ivan Lewis pledged will be developed by the end of 2007.

**Palliative care services for children and young people in England; for a copy, tel: 020 7210 4850 or visit www.dh.gov.uk*

Folic acid proposal approved
UK food watchdog the Food Standards Agency (FSA) supported proposals for folic acid to be added to all white and brown flour used in bread making, to reduce birth defects such as spina bifida.

There have been concerns that the fortification of bread could have a negative impact on older people by masking dangerous vitamin B12 deficiencies.

The FSA's board was due to announce the recommendations it will make to the government as *DN* went to press.

Taxi driver broke law over dog
A London taxi driver may lose his licence for refusing to allow a blind woman and her guide dog into his cab.

The driver failed, last July, to give any explanation to passenger Paula Thomas, an advice worker at the RNIB.

He later claimed to be allergic to dog fur, but this was rejected by magistrates after he failed to provide sufficient evidence.

The driver was found guilty of a criminal offence under the Disability Discrimination Act and is due to be sentenced on 8 June.

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Doctors admit to illegal operation

BY SUNIL PECK

The doctors who performed surgery on the disabled American girl Ashley X to prevent her body from developing have admitted that they acted illegally.

Ashley, who is severely disabled with learning difficulties, was given hormone treatment, a hysterectomy and other surgery aimed at making it easier for her parents to care for her.

The doctors' admission came after an investigation by the Washington Protection and Advocacy System (WPAS), which found they had broken Washington state law by performing the hysterectomy without obtaining a court order.

Dr David Fisher, medical director at Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center in Seattle, accepted "full responsibility" for a "miscommunication" that led to a failure to obtain a court order, and said steps were being taken to ensure the hospital did not break the law again.

The hospital will also appoint someone with a disability rights perspective to its ethics committee, and has promised to obtain a court order for any future "growth attenuation" procedures involving children with learning difficulties.

Curt Decker, executive director of the US's National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), said: "We hope that



Ashley X: Given hormones, a hysterectomy and other surgery

the agreement between WPAS and Children's Hospital will be the first step in resolving this issue and that the long-term result will be an end to the use of the 'Ashley Treatment'."

Andy Rickell, an executive director at the UK disability charity Scope, which has led a campaign to prevent any disabled children in the UK under-

going similar treatment, welcomed the WPAS investigation.

He said: "We believe it is vital that decisions about medical interventions are made in the best interests of the disabled person in question – not their family or medical professionals – and that these decisions are made in court, not behind closed doors."

Guilty verdict welcomed

Campaigners have welcomed the murder conviction of a man who helped his disabled wife to kill herself.

Liverpool Crown Court was told that Frank Lund, 58, from Wallasey, Merseyside, suffocated his wife, Patricia, last September. She had been severely depressed and her husband said she begged him to help her to die.

Dame Jane Campbell, campaign convener of Not Dead Yet UK, welcomed the guilty verdict but said it did not necessarily show a shift towards treating the killing of disabled people as seriously as that of non-disabled people.

She said the fact that Mrs Lund did not have a progressive or incapacitating impairment was probably a significant factor in the jury's decision.

She said: "If [Mrs Lund] had been somebody with MS (multiple sclerosis) who could not take [herself] to the toilet, somehow in people's minds that is a fate worse than death."

Liz Sayce, chief executive of the disability charity RADAR, said: "It is a sign of a fair society that so-called mercy killings can result in conviction for murder.

"If not, we are essentially saying the life (and death) of someone who is disabled, or has a mental health condition, is less important than a non-disabled person's life. That is discrimination, pure and simple."

Lund was due to be sentenced as *DN* went to press.

Ofcom proposes more sign language shows

The broadcasting industry's regulator, Ofcom, has published a consultation document* which could lead to more television programmes in sign language.

The proposals follow research suggesting that few people make use of programmes where signers appear superimposed in the corner of the screen.

Ofcom said that feedback from disability groups suggests that few, if any, British Sign Language (BSL) users watch

such shows on low-audience satellite and cable channels.

Ofcom wants to exclude channels with small audiences from having to meet targets for sign-interpreted programming.

Instead, these smaller channels would have to broadcast programmes presented in BSL at least monthly between 7am and 11pm or enter a voluntary scheme for funding a "sign zone" on the Community Channel.

Chair of the British Deaf

Association, Francis Murphy, said: "BDA has always supported a vision of a signing channel that broadcasts a variety of quality BSL programmes at reasonable viewing times for BSL audiences of all ages and backgrounds."

Meanwhile, a BBC spokesman confirmed that *See Hear*, the magazine for BSL-users, will be moving to a mid-week, 30-minute slot on BBC2. He said the decision to shorten the programme from 45 minutes

at Saturday lunchtime – which has been criticised by some deaf people – was made by its editor, and added: "The audience for *See Hear* has declined because it inherits a children's audience rather than an adult one. The decision was taken to put it at a time where more deaf and non-deaf viewers are watching."

* To view the consultation document and to respond, visit www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/signing/

Government rejects Lords' amendments

The government has reignited debate on the mental health bill by rejecting key amendments made by the House of Lords.

It overturned amendments that required treatment of a person with mental illness to have a therapeutic benefit, that community treatment orders be restricted to people with a history of relapse, and that under-age children should not be placed in adult psychiatric wards.

But health minister Rosie Winterton said she would consider a compromise proposal from MPs on the therapeutic benefit issue and would rethink the matter of children under 18 being placed on adult wards.

Ms Winterton said she would come back with new proposals during the report stage of the bill, which was expected as *DN* went to press.

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Capacity code welcomed

Campaigners have welcomed government guidance for those who make decisions on behalf of people who lack capacity.

The code of practice*, published as part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, aims to help professionals make decisions in the best interests of individuals, and where possible support them to make decisions.

Constitutional affairs minister Cathy Ashton said: "Today

marks an important step in insuring that people who lack capacity to make decisions get the best deal over their care."

Richard Kramer, chair of the Making Decisions Alliance, welcomed the code, but said: "It must be accompanied by additional measures to bring about a change of attitude."

*For copies, tel: 0870 6005522, or visit www.dca.gov.uk/capacity/index.htm



Royal Mail: The Countess of Wessex, right, visited disabled employees at London's Canary Wharf to see Mencap's WorkRight employment scheme in action. The project matches people with learning difficulties to jobs in major corporations. She is pictured with Tom Jeans, a mailroom operative for Pitney Bowes.

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Equipment: councils may be sued

BY PAUL CARTER

Local authorities and primary care trusts (PCTs) could be sued for failing to provide disabled children with vital equipment, a charity has claimed.

In a new report*, BDF Newlife said that a "shameful failure of equipment provision" is putting a quarter of a million children at risk, and has engaged the services of human rights lawyers to consider legal action.

Sheila Brown, the charity's co-founder and chief executive, said: "If a case does go to court, statutory services will have to justify their policies, be transpar-

ent in their decision-making, show they acted properly and there were truly exceptional reasons for not following current guidelines in the provision of equipment to children with disabilities."

The charity claims its own spending on equipment has increased from £37,000 a year to almost £1million a year in three years as a result of the deterioration of statutory provision. It is calling on MPs to support its early-day motion, sponsored by Dr Tony Wright MP, urging the government to improve provision of equipment to disabled and terminally-ill children.

A Department of Health spokesman said that the Our Health, Our Care, Our Say white paper outlined how care should be provided closer to patients' homes and promote independence and participation in society, and that community equipment services should play a "key role" in this.

He said: "Given the substantial funding that PCTs and local councils receive each year, we would expect that they would have these services at the forefront of their plans."

*It's Not Too Much To Ask; for a copy, tel: 01543 468888 or visit www.bdfnewlife.co.uk

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Charity demands rehabilitation pay

A disability charity has called for rehabilitation leave for disabled employees who need long periods off work because of their condition.

The call came after the Court of Appeal upheld a tribunal's ruling that civil servant Kathleen O'Hanlon was not discriminated against by a policy that did not give her unlimited full pay during long absences from work.

Mrs O'Hanlon, who worked for HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and had depression, was given full pay for six months and then received reduced levels.

The employment tribunal also ruled that HMRC made reasonable adjustments, by cutting her hours and transferring her to a more convenient location. But Guy Parckar, public policy manager at Leonard Cheshire, said: "If sick pay policies don't support people who need time off because of their impairment, the case for some other support, like formal 'rehabilitation leave', is more pressing."

New bulbs could cause 'severe' reactions

Government plans to phase out incandescent light bulbs by 2011 could put disabled people at risk, say campaigners.

Following the government's announcement in March, Spectrum, the Alliance for Light Sensitivity, said the switch to fluorescent light bulbs could cause severe reactions in people with conditions such as lupus, xeroderma pigmentosum, forms of eczema and dermatitis, and electrosensitivity. The switch to the more energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs is part of an EU agreement to reduce car-

bon emissions by 20 per cent by 2020.

An early-day motion tabled by Bruce George MP calls on the government to ensure incandescent light bulbs will still be available for people with light-sensitive conditions.

Ruth Calder, Spectrum coordinator, said: "People with these types of long-term health conditions often lead very restricted lives. If this ban goes ahead, many will be unable to use electric lighting at home, or go anywhere else where it is in use."

Rod Read, director of Electrosensitivity UK, said the proposed changes were part of "the same frantic techno rush" that put wi-fi into schools before testing the health repercussions.

He said the new light bulbs should be tested to ensure "especially vulnerable sub-groups" were protected.

A Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs spokeswoman said it had met with "interested parties" to "minimise adverse impacts".

Restricted growth: report shows bias

BY IVY BROADHEAD

People with restricted growth face more medical problems and social barriers, including discrimination within the workplace, than had previously been realised, a new study* shows.

Almost all participants had experienced staring and pointing, with some even subjected to physical violence, the study by Newcastle University and the Restricted Growth Association found. This led to 63 per cent of restricted growth people feeling unsafe in public.

Dr Tom Shakespeare, a research fellow at Newcastle University, who is of restricted

growth himself, said: "The level of prejudice which respondents experienced is very alarming.

"High levels of abuse can damage an individual's self-esteem, cause unhappiness and even clinical depression, and can actually deter them from going out in public.

"The reality is that society tends to underestimate the health and social disadvantages for people with restricted growth, particularly for older people."

The study also found that people with restricted growth were twice as likely to live alone, and more likely to be employed in low-skilled occu-

pations than average-height counterparts. Participants experienced medical problems much earlier than had been assumed, with 61 per cent experiencing pain by their 20s.

The authors of the report are now calling for initiatives in schools to help combat negative public reactions to restricted growth people, more comprehensive healthcare services, and for the government to work with employers to challenge negative assumptions about restricted growth people.

*A small matter of equality – living with restricted growth; for a copy, tel: 01935 841364 or visit www.restrictedgrowth.co.uk

Survey weighs up bay abuse

DN CAMPAIGN



Baywatch campaigners are appealing for readers to take part in a national survey* of the abuse of disabled parking bays.

The survey – by DN, the disabled drivers' charity Mobilise and the British Polio Fellowship, will take place between July 23 and 29.

Graham Ball, chief executive of the British Polio Fellowship, said: "If our members cannot park, they cannot live their lives – they cannot shop, they cannot go to the hospital, they cannot get on the train. They become virtual prisoners."

Helen Smith, Mobilise's director of policy and campaigns, said: "We are receiving a large number of calls from people who are constantly finding they can't find any disabled parking spaces."

*See next month's DN for details, which will also be on www.disabilitynow.org.uk



Rights knight: Disability Rights Commission chairman Sir Bert Massie received his knighthood from the Queen last month. Sir Bert, who was born in Liverpool, was awarded the knighthood in January's New Year's honours list, for services to disabled people.

Savoy ramps up the price

The prestigious Savoy Hotel has been accused of a "breathtaking" lack of awareness of discrimination law after trying to charge £1,000 to provide a temporary wheelchair ramp at a ceremony attended by Dame Tanni Grey Thompson.

The organisers of the Romantic Novelists Association (RNA) awards refused to pay and the hotel, in London's West End, eventually dropped the

demand and apologised. A Disability Rights Commission spokesman said: "It is breathtaking that they are so unaware of responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act."

But he said conference organisers should also be aware of their own responsibilities under the act. A hotel spokeswoman said: "We appreciate that we handled it less than sensitively and less than intelligently."

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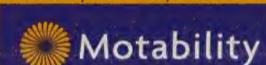
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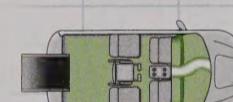


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ANGEL born 05.02.05

Angel is a settled little girl whose carer finds a pleasure to care for. She is of white British heritage and has dark brown eyes and brown hair. Angel is feeding and sleeping well. She is a contented child, who demonstrates a good attachment to her carer by smiling, looking for her and showing some distress when she leaves.

Angel likes her toys and is interested in her immediate environment, but shows a definite preference for interaction with people. She is a sociable child who loves the attention of older children. She has a happy disposition and smiles, laughs and gurgles for much of the day.

Angel was born at 41 weeks gestation with a birth weight of 2980 grams by caesarean section. She was soon admitted to the Neonatal Unit with a diagnosis of neonatal abstinence syndrome. She had the characteristics of a withdrawing baby, but responded to the treatment.

On day 10 she developed seizures and skin lesions, which was diagnosed as herpes encephalitis.

She was treated with antibiotics and was discharged from hospital on 24th March 2005. A paediatrician monitors Angel and she has undergone a MRI scan and EEG. The results have shown extensive loss of brain substance but no other abnormality of the brain so she is not thought to be at risk of further seizures or epilepsy.

Angel is developmentally delayed and is making slow progress. An adoptive family is required that has few expectations and is able to support her as dictated by her level of need. There are significant unknowns about her future. She currently attends weekly physiotherapy sessions and a Mother and Toddler group with her carer. It is anticipated that she will shortly start attending the special needs nursery.

Angel needs an adoptive family, who can offer her a secure and stable family life, with lots of attention and stimulation. A family will need to be able to devote time to taking Angel to health appointments and to be a good advocate so she receives the resources she requires. Letterbox contact with Angel's birth family is anticipated. Angel is subject to a Care Order. She may be eligible for financial support.



BILLY born 20.08.04

Billy was born at 27 weeks + 6 days. He was extremely small for his gestational age and weighed only 14 ounces. He has fair hair and blue eyes.

Billy is growing very slowly and is still very small for his age. He is alert and vocal and tracks the movements of his foster carer. He sits unaided and plays with toys, and he demonstrates good hand eye coordination. Billy has an engaging smile. His foster carer describes him as having a cheeky personality. Billy plays "peep-bo" and "patacake". He understands a lot of what his carer says and responds to "give us a kiss" and "clap hands". He is starting to 'talk' in his own way and is understood by his foster family.

Billy's feeding has been slow and he has small amounts of pureed food. He prefers puddings to dinners, and his foster carer gives him a lot of encouragement. Billy continues to have medical tests and lots of medical appointments but his condition has not been diagnosed and his condition is believed to be rare.

Billy has been freed for adoption. He requires a well-supported adoptive family who can support on-going medical treatment if necessary and who can accept the uncertainty regarding his future development. He needs a family who will promote his health and development to enable him to reach his potential. He is very responsive to other children and enjoys playing beside his carer's children. Letterbox contact is envisaged with Billy's birth family. Financial support may be payable. DLA has been applied for.

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You do not need to be approved as prospective adopters; we would be able to assess a family who appear to be suitable.

Benefit rules 'should be much simpler'

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

An overhaul of the benefits system would make life much simpler for claimants, according to benefits experts.

The work and pensions select committee heard evidence last month on how to improve and simplify the way benefits, including disability benefits, are structured and delivered.

Sue Royston, of the charity Citizens Advice, said the system should have fewer points of contact, be easier to navigate, and make it clearer to claimants that they are often entitled to multiple benefits.

She cited an example of a man with mental health issues who was on long-term incapacity benefit and did not realise he was also eligible for disability living allowance and income support.

Ms Royston said the complexity of the system means changes in circumstances, such as a hike in income from another

er benefit, can affect entitlement in a way that would be "impossible" to understand by many claimants.

She said: "We need a system that is easy to use.

"We see so many clients who miss out on parts of the system."

Ms Royston and the two other panel members, Fran Bennett, from the University of Oxford, and Donald Hersch, from Joseph Rowntree Foundation, agreed that a reduction in means testing would also make the system less complex.

Mr Hersch said research shows the general population are misinformed and have a negative view of the benefits system.

He said there was no "magic solution", but the first step was to make the facts about poverty clear and ensure the public knows what it means to "live on the sort of incomes that claimants are getting".



Five live: Members of Abnormally Funny People (AFP) comedy collective performed on buses in five English cities to promote the Disability Rights Commission's new GOJO campaign* to make public transport easier for young disabled people. Pictured is AFP's Tanyalee Davis, front, with passengers in Manchester. *www.mygojo.co.uk

Parking bay abusers face £100 fines

DN CAMPAIGN



Disabled bay abusers will be slapped with a fine if they continue to park in designated blue badge spaces at a shopping centre in Bournemouth.

After finding that bays were being abused up to 20 per cent of the time, management of the

Castlepoint Shopping Centre implemented a £100 fine for non-blue badge holders. Fines will be halved to £50 if paid within 14 days. The scheme began on 14 May and a private company will charge £40 per ticket to enforce the fines.

Castlepoint will use the surplus £10 per ticket to improve facilities for disabled people in

Cold reception

DN CAMPAIGN



The government has again refused to extend assistance to severely disabled people to help them pay their fuel bills.

Lord (Colin) Low, chair of the RNIB, who was made a "people's peer" last year, had raised the issue during a Lords debate.

He told the debate on fuel poverty that disabled people "suffer disproportionately" from fuel poverty and about young disabled people who need to heat their homes for 20 hours a day.

Lord Low said the failure to extend payments "denies help to many who need it most". But energy minister Lord (Peter) Truscott said support came from disability living allowance and attendance allowance.

ADVERTORIAL

Want to make a difference? The Permanent Secretary at the Department for Work and Pensions explains why the Department wants to attract a greater diversity of people into its top jobs.

The Department for Work and Pensions is already a very diverse organisation, and we are proud of that. However, if we are to meet the challenges ahead - designing and delivering policies and services for the diverse citizens of the UK - we need to attract people from all backgrounds. We need, in particular, a diversity of knowledge and experience at our most senior levels if we are to bring further understanding and fresh insights to our organisation.

We want the best people from all backgrounds and, with that in mind, we would like to attract leaders and professionals from every part of society including people with experience that may not be seen as 'typical' for civil servants. We are also keen to see people coming to us from the private sector, local authorities, the NHS and the voluntary sector.

Over the next year or so, because of a mixture of planned career moves, retirements and new posts, we expect to be advertising a range of senior job opportunities. These are likely to include senior posts in our front line operations, change leaders, policy makers, accountants and information technology experts. Salaries will range from £50,000 to £100,000 and more.

If you are interested in joining us, why not look out for these vacancies and apply for any posts which you think you could fill?

Or, better still, you can register your interest now and we will contact you as and when specific jobs are advertised. We can also arrange for you to talk to a member of our top team, in confidence, about whether your skills and experience might be what we need. The contact email to register your interest is senior.recruitment@dwp.gsi.gov.uk and we will get back to you. In the meantime, this is just a bit more about us.

What we do

Commonly known as 'the DWP', the Department for Work and Pensions is one of the UK's largest government departments with five major delivery agencies - Jobcentre Plus, The Pensions Service, the Disability and Carers Service, the Child Support Agency and the Rent Service. We are responsible for multi-billion pound budgets and we are one of the country's largest employers with over 100,000 staff.

We work on a big scale: The Pensions Service gives financial support to 11 million pensioners in the UK and every working day around 7,000 Jobcentre Plus customers move into work, including over 100,000 lone parents last year. Overall, we manage some 17 million payments per week, and deal with nearly 35 million incoming and 7 million outgoing calls annually.

Unlike most organisations, we count the vast majority of the population as our customers.

At some point in their lives, most people need to deal with us, sometimes at a very difficult and distressing time. It might be because of a death in the family or loss of job, because of illness or disability, or it might be when a relationship breaks down.

We also work with our Ministers to develop policies and, unlike most Government Departments, one of our unique selling points is that we often deliver the policies as well via our front line offices. Our vision is of "Work, Welfare, Well-being, Well-delivered". To deliver our vision, we have some important and challenging strategic aims. They are to:

- contribute towards fair, safe and fulfilling lives, free from poverty, for children, people in work and retirement, and those with disabilities;
- reduce welfare dependency and increase economic competitiveness by helping people to work wherever they can and employers to secure the skills and employees they need;
- provide greater choice, personalisation and quality of service for customers in their interests and those of the taxpayers.

The scope and breadth of the challenges that face everyone in DWP every day can't be understated, and that means that we need the best people, from every background, to help us meet them.

The challenge

Modernisation over the last five years means that DWP looks and feels very different from the stereotypical image of a Civil Service bureaucracy. Our customers can now increasingly expect a more personal service, fewer forms to fill in, a far more welcoming and relaxed environment in most of our offices, and to look for jobs and receive their benefits through one organisation. And in recent years, we have recruited a wide range of talented people into the Department from outside the Civil Service at senior levels.

But we know we still have more to do. At the heart of what we aim to achieve is a new business strategy which will transform the way that we deliver for citizens. Our aim is radically to improve both our customer service and our efficiency in the delivery of our objectives.

Join us, and you could find yourself at the heart of government, working with Ministers and senior colleagues from across Whitehall, designing policy programmes, working on our organisational transformation, or heading up a team of IT architects! If the prospect appeals, we would like to hear from you.

DWP Department for Work and Pensions

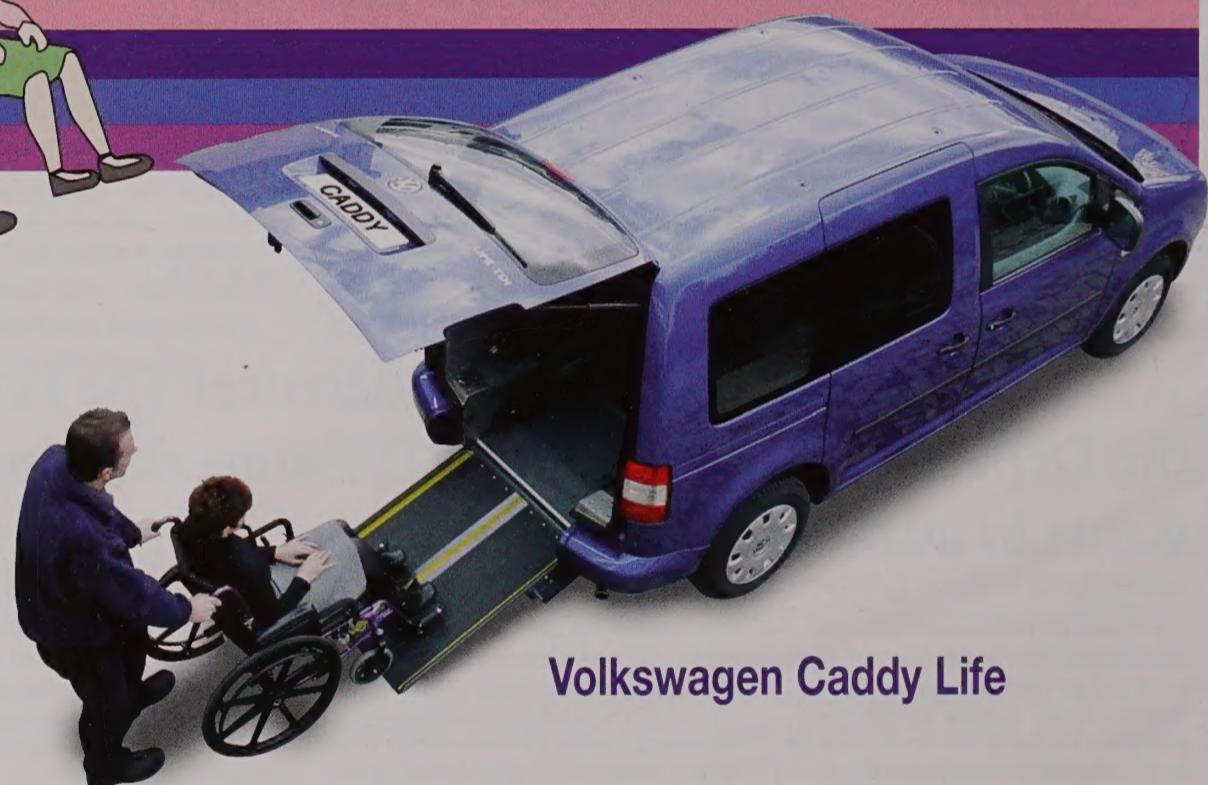
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Motability

Airline 'mistreats' girl

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

An airline has apologised to a disabled passenger and her mother after they complained of being "victimised and mistreated" on both legs of a round-trip journey.

Eliane Mackintosh, from Hampshire, lodged a complaint with Air France about the way she and her disabled daughter, Saskia, 15, were treated on flights between the UK and Martinique.

It came as the airline was rolling out its Saphir scheme, which offers services for disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility, to the

UK and 16 other countries.

On the outbound journey in March, staff attempted to squeeze Saskia and her £400 Air France-approved chair into a row with inadequate space.

Saskia was moved to a row by an emergency exit, but her chair still did not fit. Her chair had to be secured by a rope before the pilot would allow the flight to go ahead.

There were also problems on the return flight, but staff refused to allow them to fly.

Mrs Mackintosh was removed by airport police and waited three hours for the next flight and business-class seats.

She said: "I have done this

trip several times with Saskia and it has been a battle each time because of the arrogance and ignorance of some of the Air France staff... The treatment we received on this trip was unforgivable."

The airline has reimbursed Mrs Mackintosh £819 for the price of one ticket, as well as offering a £700 travel voucher and an iPod for Saskia. But Mrs Mackintosh wants more generous compensation and a new strategy for dealing with disabled passengers.

An Air France spokeswoman said the incident was "extremely unusual" and there would be an internal review.

Call for overhaul of care services

Social care services are "timid" in vision and ambition, according to a new report* commissioned by the government.

The report, conducted by Dame Denise Platt, chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection, came as the government announced a five-point "blueprint for social care excellence".

It says social care services are in need of "imagination,

excitement and enthusiasm" to make the experiences of people who rely on them "liberating and affirming".

Dame Denise said: "I hope this report provides some ideas about how the service can begin to rebuild its own confidence and the confidence of the public in the valuable and, for the most part, invisible service – social care."

Ivan Lewis, social care minis-

ter, said "she was right to challenge the sector to raise its game and demonstrate a clear and ambitious vision for the future".

Following the report, he announced measures including a new skills academy for care workers and a national social care board to advise ministers.

**The status of social care – a review 2007. For a copy, tel: 0870 155 5455 or visit www.dh.gov.uk*



Steering class: Ten visually-impaired and 10 sighted young Londoners will be taught to sail to international standard in the run-up to London's Paralympics in 2012. The Tideway Sailability club in Surrey Docks held a taster day for the 2SAIL 2012 scheme (pictured) on 29 April. For details, call Clare on 020 8858 1822 or visit www.tidewaysailability.org

Surfing offers route to 2012

A new website aims to find potential British athletes for the 2012 Paralympics in London.

Parasport* allows disabled people to find out about local sports facilities and to access support and funding advice.

Speaking at the launch of the scheme, Dame Tanni Grey Thompson said: "We need to encourage more youngsters, as well as the disabled community as a whole, to take up sport,

either competitively or for health reasons."

Phil Lane, chief executive of the British Paralympic Association, said: "Many young people do not necessarily know how to access sport for disabled people in their local area. Equally, we needed to address finding new athletes for the GB team in time for 2012 and beyond."

* www.parasport.org.uk

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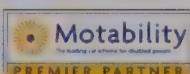
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'ME is a physical condition'

Campaigners have welcomed new research that appears to show that ME (myalgic encephalomyelitis) is a physical and not a psychiatric condition.

The new definition, compiled by ME expert Dr Byron Hyde at the Nightingale Research Foundation in Canada, separates ME from chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) and defines ME as a brain injury.

ME is estimated to affect 250,000 people in the UK, around 10 per cent of whom are children.

Symptoms include loss of balance and memory, difficulties speaking and thinking and abnormal sensory perception. Inappropriate treatment can lead to patients experiencing seizures and paralysis and some may need to be tube-fed.

Jane Colby, executive director of The Young ME Sufferers Trust (YMEST), who helped compile the new definition, said: "We desperately need a testable definition which can show up the serious physical disabilities that these children have."

"Viral damage to the brain is behind this illness and the Nightingale definition reveals the pattern of damage caused."

She added: "You will never



Shannen Dabson, 12, an advocate of the The Young ME Sufferers Trust, with her Tymes Trustcard, which helps explain her condition to school staff

get proper diagnosis and treatment [of ME] until it is removed from the umbrella term of CFS."

*For more information, contact the trust; tel: 01245 401080 or visit www.tymestrust.org

Report praises progress in mental health care

BY SUNIL PECK

A government progress report on mental health care has welcomed the increase in investment since a national service framework was launched eight years ago.

The report said there were 1,300 more consultant psychiatrists, 2,700 more clinical psychologists and nearly 10,000 more mental health nurses than when the framework for mental health was launched in 1999.

There has also been a 20-fold increase in the use of modern anti-psychotic drugs, and a national patient survey found 77 per cent of community

patients rated their care as good, very good or excellent.

Professor Louis Appleby, national clinical lead for mental health, said problems in mental health care remained, but the World Health Organisation says England has the best mental health services in Europe.

Cecilia Weightman, a service-user from Bristol, said she had received some "excellent" treatment and some "poor" mental health services.

She told DN: "Just because there are more [staff], it does not mean to say that they are doing a good job. I don't think that Labour can assume that just because they throw money

at mental health services, that they are improving them."

And Fenella Lemonsky, a service-user from north London, who has had a personality disorder, thinks there has been a "dramatic improvement" in the practise of evidence-based mental health among psychiatrists over the last 10 years.

She said mental health services in her area were improving, although she was forced to leave her borough to get specialist treatment.

* *Ten Years On: Progress on Mental Health Care Reform; for a copy, visit www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/DH_074237*

Drug 'cuts risk of post-menopausal osteoporosis'

A new treatment significantly reduces the risk of fractures for post-menopausal women with osteoporosis, researchers have found.

The drug, zoledronic acid, was taken once a year over a three-year period by trialists. It

cut the risk of spinal fractures by 70 per cent and the risk of broken hips by 40 per cent.

A National Osteoporosis Society (NOS) spokeswoman described the treatment as "exciting" and added: "This drug is not yet licensed for use

in the UK, but when available, it will add to the choice of drug treatments available for people at risk of breaking a bone due to osteoporosis."

The NOS estimates that three million people in the UK have osteoporosis.

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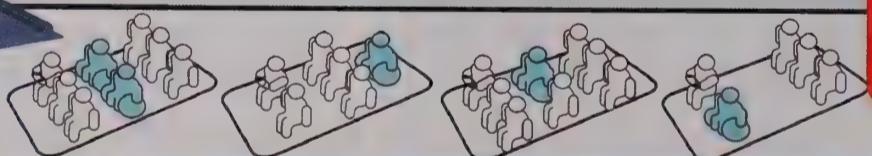
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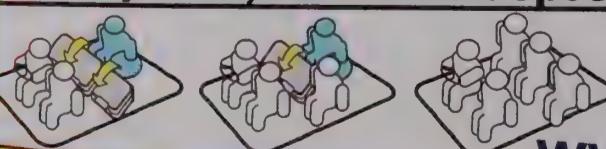
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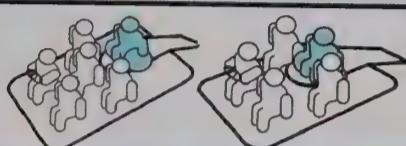


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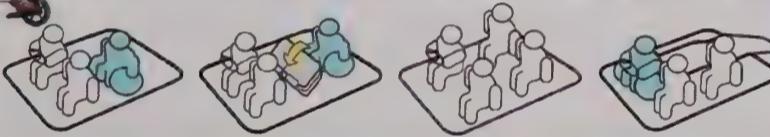
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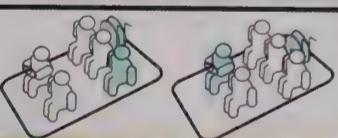
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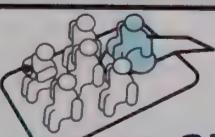


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Inquiry gives voice to tainted



Infected: (From left to right) Bob Threakall, pictured with his son David, died after contracting HIV from contaminated blood; Chris Hodgson, former chairman of the Haemophilia Society, who was infected with hepatitis C but recovered, gives evidence at the inquiry



After 20 years of campaigning, the haemophilia community has finally secured an inquiry into the NHS contaminated blood scandal, which has already resulted in 1,757 deaths. Sunil Peck investigates

It is surely one of the greatest scandals of late 20th century Britain. Almost 5,000 people with haemophilia infected with hepatitis C from NHS blood. At least 1,200 of them also infected with HIV. More than 1,750 deaths. Many more terminally ill. Health warnings ignored. Children with haemophilia allegedly injected with infected blood as part of "infectivity" trials, without their parents' permission. Crucial government documents allegedly shredded.

Although thousands of people with haemophilia were given contaminated NHS blood products during the 1970s and early 1980s, successive governments have refused to conduct a public inquiry into the disaster.

But almost 20 years of campaigning by the haemophilia community, spearheaded by Lord (Alf) Morris, Britain's first minister for disabled people and president of the Haemophilia Society, has finally led to an independent inquiry.

The inquiry, being chaired by Lord (Peter) Archer of Sandwell QC, is investigating the circumstances surrounding the supply of contaminated blood to people with haemophilia and the consequences for people with the condition, and will suggest steps to address their needs.

Lord Morris says the inquiry is "historic". "Successive governments have been pressed for a public inquiry since

1989," he told *DN*. "There has been a public inquiry into the Paddington rail disaster and into the sinking of the *Marchioness* in the River Thames, and rightly so. But no public inquiry into 1,757 deaths from contaminated NHS blood products."

He says there have been internal government inquiries into the scandal, but the independent inquiry is significant because "for the first time, the voices of those who know most about the disaster, namely those who have been

'The voices of those who know most about the disaster, those who have been infected and the bereaved families, are being heard'

infected, and the bereaved families of those who have died, are being heard".

Roddy Morrison, the chairman of the Haemophilia Society, also welcomes the inquiry and says it is "particularly important" that the voices of the haemophilia community will be listened to.

He says: "Many have suffered unduly with financial hardship. Some have even had to give up their homes. Many more have found themselves to be uninsurable, unemployable and unable to make adequate provision for their dependants."

Gareth Lewis has

haemophilia and was infected with HIV from contaminated blood during the 1980s. He is a trustee of the Haemophilia Society and also chairs the TaintedBlood pressure group, which has been campaigning for a public inquiry and compensation for those affected. He is "keeping his fingers crossed" that "justice will be done and that government will take notice" of the inquiry.

He says: "We have all been affected in similar ways. There are one or two differences, but most of the stories are very similar and are about how our lives have been ruined by this and by successive viruses."

According to Lewis, economics is at the root of the problem, because it was cheaper for the UK to import blood from America rather than supplying and manufacturing its own blood.

In a statement, TaintedBlood also heavily criticised the government for refusing to hold a full public inquiry and for failing to publish all the available information. It said it feared that the inquiry would prove to be toothless and would fail to expose the full truth.

The tragedy dates back to the 1970s. From around 1973, people with haemophilia began using a clotting agent, Factor VIII, which was seen as revolutionary because patients could inject it at home, rather than having to go to hospital for the treatment.

The product was

manufactured in America, often with plasma from donors who were paid for giving blood.

But campaigners claim that much of this blood came from drug addicts, prostitutes and other people with infectious diseases.

By the late 1970s, people with haemophilia were beginning to die. In 1981, some blood products imported from America were found to be infected with HIV.

In 1975, David Owen, the UK's health minister, had told parliament he had secured

'It's because you know at the bottom of your heart that you are right and you know something is horribly wrong'

funding to avoid relying on imported blood products. He discovered years later that the funding had not been used for that purpose.

One of those who has already given evidence to the inquiry is Sue Threakall. Her husband, Bob, died after contracting HIV from contaminated blood. She gave up her job as a deputy head teacher to look after her husband when he became ill, and has been unable to resume her teaching career since. She has spent many years trying to "get all the information out in the public domain".

Threakall says: "It is not because I wanted to spend 20

years with this nibbling away in the background, it is not because I wanted to go bankrupt in the process, it is not because I wanted to have it compromise relationships with my family.

"It is just because you know at the bottom of your heart that you are right and you know that something is horribly wrong."

In her evidence to the inquiry, she accused doctors of treating patients without telling them of the risk of infection from HIV or hepatitis C.

She said doctors also failed to tell patients when they were being tested for HIV, or tell them immediately if they tested positive.

Her husband was not told for six months, despite doctors knowing the couple were having unprotected sex. Threakall said that when they were informed that Bob had tested positive for HIV, doctors said they did not know what it meant, and that he should wear a sheath during sexual intercourse. They were also advised not to try for a baby for another two or three years.

Another widow, Maureen Murphy, told the inquiry she had been "devastated" by the death of her husband, William, in 1994. He died after contracting hepatitis. She said she has received no financial support from the government, because widows of people who died from hepatitis C before 2003 are ineligible.

Although funding was

Blood victims

provided in 1987 for people infected with HIV from contaminated NHS blood, the government did not agree to extend this to people infected with hepatitis C until 2003.

Peter Mossman, who was infected with hepatitis C, told the inquiry that his life had been "destroyed".

'I hope somebody has the guts to come here and say: 'I am sorry for the way we treated our patients'"

"Disgraceful and disgusting as all this is, what I find even worse is the lengths that the [medical, political and legal] professions seem to have gone through to cover up this disgusting state of affairs and all the time telling [infected] people like me that I was given the best available treatment at the time."

A Department of Health (DH) spokeswoman says: "We have great sympathy for those who were infected with hepatitis C and HIV and understand why they want to know how it happened and

why it could not have been prevented.

"However, the government of the day acted in good faith, relying on the information available at the time."

She says the government has been "open and transparent" and has made public "as much relevant information" as possible.

The DH is compiling a report on all the documents it holds on the issue and will send a copy to Lord Archer.

She says the DH is also prepared to release to the inquiry "a small number of documents" so far withheld from publication.

Meanwhile, the inquiry continues. Politicians, scientists and medical experts are due to give evidence, with the findings expected to be published in the summer.

David Fielding needed a liver transplant after contracting hepatitis C from contaminated blood and was treated "appallingly and disgustingly" by doctors. He told the inquiry: "I hope somebody has got the guts to come here and say: 'I am sorry (for) the way we treated our patients.'"

'There have been attempts to cover it all up'

Richard Waring has been receiving home treatment using Factor VIII since 1977.

Although he tested negative for HIV in 1985, he tested positive for hepatitis C in 1994.

Richard's wife was "casually informed" of the test results by a receptionist in front of other patients, and left to tell Richard when he returned from work. They never received a formal apology for the incident and Richard says the hospital gave him little support.

Following prolonged treatment for hepatitis C,

Richard has been in remission for more than five years and says the virus is unlikely to return.

In 2002, he took medical retirement after 22 years as a college lecturer, because he felt so ill after the treatment.

Richard could also be infected with CJD, after learning in 2001 that he had received Factor VIII made from a donor who developed the virus. In 2005, he switched to a Factor VIII product which has been declared safe from blood-borne infections.

He says: "It is one of the



biggest treatment disasters on record, but I do think there have been attempts along the line to cover things up and to prevent the truth from coming out. Finally, I think that the truth is beginning to come out."

'There are a lot of people worse off than me'



Gareth Lewis is chairman of the pressure group TaintedBlood. He was infected with HIV in the early 1980s, following the use of Factor VIII through the NHS.

He lost his job and divorced his wife soon after becoming infected. He was medically retired in 1997.

Gareth has an uncle who died of AIDS, and a brother and another relative who both contracted HIV and are still alive. All contracted the conditions through infected blood products.

He feels "really well", but "that could change tomorrow". Last year, Gareth caught a virus. His weight dropped from 12 to eight stone and he spent weeks

in bed. When the drugs are working, he is happy, but days later can be "back to facing the prospect of dying of AIDS within six months".

Gareth says he has learned to cope with pus coming out of his arm, his ears bleeding, sickness, diarrhoea and coughing up blood.

But he says: "I will never get depressed. There are a lot more people worse off [than me]. You have only got to look at the people living with HIV in the Third World."

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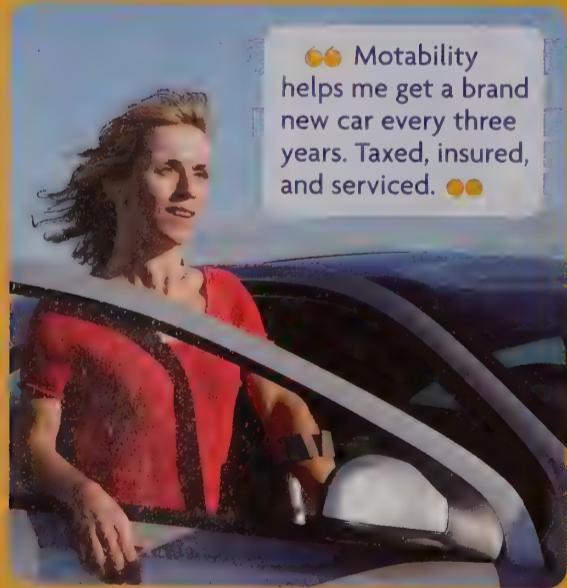
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The third annual Visa Paralympic World Cup took place at venues across Manchester from 7-13 May. The competition provided plenty of drama and top-quality sporting action from some of the world's best elite disabled athletes, as well as being the occasion Dame Tanni Grey Thompson chose to call time on her illustrious career. Paul Carter reports

Rising stars pick up Tanni's baton



RICHARD LANE, SPORTSBEAT IMAGES



PAUL THOMAS, SPORTSBEAT IMAGES

The classifications

Swimming

S = freestyle, backstroke and butterfly
SB = breaststroke
SM = individual medley
1-10 = physical disability
11-13 = visual impairment

Athletics

F = field athletes
T = track athletes
11-13 = visually impaired
31-38 = cerebral palsy

41-46 = amputees and les autres (others)
51-56 = wheelchair athletes

40 = athletes with restricted growth

Wheelchair basketball

Athletes are classified according to their physical ability and are given a points rating between 1 and 4.5, with 1 being the most severely impaired and 4.5 the least. Each team fields five players but may not

exceed a total of 14 points at any given time.

Cycling

LC1: riders with upper limb disabilities
LC2: riders with disabilities in one leg but who can pedal normally
LC3: riders with an impairment in one lower limb who will usually pedal with one leg only
LC4: riders with disabilities affecting both legs

Sprint stars: Above left, South Africa's Oscar Pistorius wins the T44 100m; above right, Britain's David Weir displays his gold medals for the T54 200m and 400m

BY PAUL CARTER

A rain-soaked crowd at the Manchester Regional Arena joined the great and good of disability sport in preparing to say goodbye to Dame Tanni Grey Thompson.

The 37-year-old, Britain's most successful Paralympic athlete, was competing professionally for the final time, and despite the outstanding schedule of events throughout the rest of the day, it was the T53 200m that most of the assembled media had come to see.

Sadly for some, the Hollywood-style ending that many had hoped for was not to be, as Dame Tanni had to settle for second place behind the impressive 24-year-old American

Jessica Galli. Galli powered down the home straight despite the appalling conditions, and although Tanni rallied, she struggled to close the gap in the last 50m.

She ended her afternoon with an emotional lap of honour, to generous applause from the spectators. She said: "It's probably the only time in my life I didn't mind coming second, and I can actually say it was the taking part that counted."

Echoing another great Olympian, Sir Steve Redgrave, Tanni added: "I don't have to do another sprint start again and I'm really pleased about that. I never, ever, want to do that again."

However, elsewhere on the track, Tanni's retirement barely overshadowed the impressive

performances of other British athletes.

On the day one of the sport's great veterans bowed out, impressive performances were made by a promising clutch of up-and-coming athletes, some of them making their first appearances at a Paralympic World Cup.

In just the second track event of the afternoon, debutant Ben Rushgrove blew away the competition to set a new world record of 24.86 in the T36 200m, while fellow newcomer John McFall took gold in the T42 200m.

"I have no idea where that came from," said Rushgrove, who also won gold in the 100m.

"I knew I was looking for the world record sometime this season but this is my first time out and to do it in these conditions is amazing."

London marathon winner David Weir was in stunning form in the T54 200 and 400m, as he set championship records in both events on his way to picking up his golds.

He said: "That's the fastest I've ever been on this track by about two seconds, so it's a big improvement and shows how well everything is going at the moment."

Golds came elsewhere for Beverley Jones and Dan West in the shot put, while Danny Crates had to dig deep to take the T46 800m title.

Crates said: "That was a tough race, it gets harder every time I do it but that's because I put so much pressure on myself because I want to be the very best."

Although not taking the gold, young Manchester sprinter Ian

Jones put in two personal bests to finish second behind man-of-the-moment Oscar Pistorius, from South Africa, in the T44 100m and 200m.

Pistorius, still hoping to be allowed to compete against non-disabled athletes in Beijing, edged out Jones in both events, despite his prosthetic "blades" not being suited to the slippery track.

Speaking after his 200m win, he said: "The first few metres were ok but the rest of the bend was terrible." He added: "I had so much energy left as I came into the straight I had to turn it on from there, but hey, you couldn't ask for better conditions."

Jones said it was "an honour" to run against the South African. "He was even helping me set up my blocks in warm-up. He's the best," he said.

Cyclists show medal power



Riding high: above left, Britain's cyclists take on the Czech Republic; above right, Aileen McGlynn, at the back, with pilot Ellen Hunter, on their way to winning the tandem sprint

BY PAUL CARTER

It was a sensational day on the track for Great Britain's cyclists, as they smashed three world records on their way to winning seven gold medals at the Manchester Velodrome.

The tone of the day was set early on, with new world record marks being reached in the opening two events.

In heat one of the men's mixed disability team sprint, the British trio of Jody Cundy, Darren Kenny and Rik Waddon bettered their own previous

mark, clocking up a time of 52.096 seconds on their way to beating Spain, who finished in 1:00.275. In the qualifiers for the tandem sprint, in which a blind or visually impaired cyclist rides with a sighted "pilot", Anthony Kappes and Barney Storey also beat their own world's best to set a new record of 10.410 seconds.

Kappes said: "It was quite cold on the track today which isn't conducive to breaking world records, so to take a thousandth of a second off it is good."

It was then Jody Cundy's

turn to go back onto the track to cement his position as the day's big winner by claiming his second world record in the men's LC1/LC2/CP4 1km time trial final, beating in the heats team-mate Mark Bristow, who won bronze.

"If you'd asked me last year if I could break the record by that much [1.226 seconds] I would have said no," said former Paralympic swimmer Cundy, who only began international competitive cycling last year.

He added: "This year in training I've been doing PB [per-



sonal best] after PB so knew I could target a huge best today."

Elsewhere, in the women's LC1 pursuit final, world champion Sarah Bailey, another former swimmer who has swapped the pool for the velodrome, blew away her opponent Greta Neimanas.

She caught the American in just 1:54.076, and then followed up by beating her again by over four seconds in the 500m time trial with 40.066.

She said: "It's the world championships that are the focus for the whole team now

and this event is a crucial stepping stone for that."

"There is also nothing like performing in front of a home crowd in a venue where you do most of your training," added Bailey, who comes from Manchester.

The remaining medals went to Gary Williams, who beat Darren Kenny in the CP3/LC1 pursuit final, while Aileen McGlynn and pilot Ellen Hunter held off a strong Australian challenge to take top honours in the female tandem sprint.

Un 'du Toit' in Manchester

South African swimming superstar Natalie du Toit lived up to her impressive reputation by taking three gold medals on the penultimate day of the 2007 Paralympic World Cup in Manchester.

Du Toit, who has never been beaten in the Manchester pool, was victorious in the S9 100m freestyle, as well as the multi-disability 50 and 100m freestyle events, where in the latter she edged rising American teenager Jessica Long (S8) into second.

Multi-disability swimming features swimmers from various classifications who compete against the clock rather than each other.

The event is scored on a points basis, with competitors awarded more points the closer they are to the world record in their own particular category.

Du Toit said: "I just went

out there to have fun because it's still early in the season for me, but it was good to continue my good form here."

The 23-year-old told *DN* that she now has her sights set on the non-disabled Olympics in Beijing, where she is aiming to qualify for the 800m freestyle, as well as for the first-ever Olympic open water race, over 10km.

However, some very strong swims from the Great Britain team ensured that it wasn't only the international stars who went home with the plaudits.

In front of an appreciative crowd at the Manchester Aquatics Centre, the home nation took gold, silver and bronze positions in both the men's and women's SM6 200m individual medley.

The men's gold medal was taken by Sascha Kindred, who



Unstoppable: South African star Natalie du Toit maintains her unbeaten record in the Manchester pool

has not lost in that event since the Sydney Paralympics, while Newquay swimmer Matthew Whorwood took silver, with Gareth Duke picking up the bronze.

Kindred said: "There are a lot of youngsters coming through into the GB squad – half this team are under 21, so at 29 I'm one of the oldest – but I'm still fit and still swimming well."

In the women's race, Paralympic gold medallist Natalie Jones came in first in

her home city, with team-mates Nyree Lewis and Liz Johnson second and third.

Kindred added: "It's a shame we've not got another major championships this year but that means this is a key event for us, and with us and the girls both getting gold, silver and bronze – shows we are up for it."

Nyree Lewis and Gareth Duke later went on to take golds in the S6 backstroke and SB6 100m breaststroke events.

Other British gold medallists included David Roberts in the

S7 50m sprint, Fran Williamson in the S3 50m and Matt Walker in the 50m multi-disability freestyle.

The day was short of record-breaking performances although one world record went to Ioannis Kostakis, from Greece, who unexpectedly smashed the time in the S3 category earlier in the day in the qualifying heats.

British teenager Claire Cashmore set a new British record in the S9 100m freestyle, while winning silver.



Holding court: Above, the basketball final between Japan and Spain; above right, Britain's men celebrate winning their bronze medal; right, Japan's Yuka Betto makes a pass in the women's final

Men bounce back to take the bronze

BY PAUL CARTER

There were mixed emotions on court for the British wheelchair basketball teams, as the men battled back from a poor semi-final performance to win their bronze medal game, while the women's team suffered defeat at the same stage of the tournament.

After losing 53-41 to eventual winners Canada in their semi-final – a performance later described by coach Murray Treseder as “garbage” – GB's men overpowered the Netherlands to take bronze with a resounding 74-37 victory.

Treseder said: “It's no consolation that we could easily have been in the final and we need to play like that in every match.”

During a first quarter time-out the crowd was treated to the unusual sight of seeing a player receive a guard of honour as he left the court.

The gesture was in honour of 38-year-old Sinclair Thomas, who used the game to call time on a 20-year international career.

Thomas, one of the top three-point players in the world, won a bronze medal as part of the GB team at the 2004 Paralympics in Athens.

He said: “It's great to go out winning, but obviously it was a shame not to be in the final.”

The women's team, who won silver in the previous two Paralympic World Cups, were

denied a medal this time after going down 48-25 to a French team they had already beaten 42-34 earlier in the competition.

GB player Clare Strange said: “We went out there with the attitude to win the game, but unfortunately we just didn't finish off our shots.”

Team-mate Caroline Matthews said: “Everything is aimed towards getting a bronze at the Europeans in August and qualifying for Beijing next year, and this tournament has given our younger members in the team valuable experience to take forward into the season.”

Emilie Menard of France said her team had “finally woken up” in the semi-final.

She said: “We have put in a lot of work on our physicality and our shooting and we tried

to be more aggressive than in the first game against GB.”

In the men's gold medal match, Paralympic champions Canada pulled off a stunning last-gasp 49-47 victory over Australia, who were previously unbeaten in the tournament.

Despite Robert Hughes' dramatic late basket, the result could have been very different but for Australia's final shot not dropping.

In the women's event, Japan secured a rampant victory by sweeping aside the Spanish 50-17 to remain unbeaten.

Naoko Sugahara, who scored 13 points in the final, said: “We won every game in the competition but today we are very happy because we did everything right and that shows in the score.”



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Sun smiles on British duo

This year's London Wheelchair Marathon had everything – sun, sprint finishes and British winners in both the men's and women's events. Paul Carter reports

Sunshine, silly costumes – even a sprint finish – the 2007 Flora London Marathon failed to disappoint as both a celebration of sporting achievement, and a visual spectacle in its own right.

The colourful carnival atmosphere provided a fitting backdrop to the wheelchair races, which once again provided drama and excitement, with athletes David Weir and Shelly Woods completing a British double in the men's and women's events for the first time in five years.

It was a remarkable third London victory for Weir, who took the race after a dramatic sprint finish in the last 600m, beating close rival Kurt Fearnley by just one second, in a time of 1:30:49.

Asked how his latest win

compared to previous London victories, Weir said: "This one was better."

"He's the man to beat at the moment in marathons, and it was very close."

The pair had been virtually inseparable throughout the race, with split times showing that there was never more than one second between them.

"It was a little bit tactical," he said. "The first 15 miles we were really flying, we went out really hard. The last seven miles, it slowed drastically."

Weir later revealed that he and his rival, who reversed places in the Los Angeles Marathon in March, had shared a symbolic handshake as they passed Big Ben – traditionally the landmark that signifies the final

mile of the race.

After going down with flu during his preparations, Weir had an ominous warning for his future rivals.

When asked if he had reached his physical peak in time for the race, he said simply: "There's more to come."

Behind Weir and Fearnley, Saul Mendoza from Mexico came third in a time of 1:33:46, with South African Ernst Van Dyk fourth.

In the women's race, rising star Shelly Woods followed up her win in Los Angeles in March to claim her first ever London Marathon title.

The 20-year-old had finished in second place for the previous two years, behind Italian Francesca Porcellato.

This time around, Woods clocked up a time of 1:50:40, just short of her personal best and the course record, finishing nine minutes ahead of Porcellato.

She said: "I love the marathon and to win it in your home country is brilliant. I've dreamt of winning this race."

Woods set a fast pace right from the start, and put further distance between herself

and her rival at each split.

"I went off hard because I didn't want it to come down to a sprint finish, and it worked," she said.

"I just went off, put my head down and basically tried to time-trial it, and my time-trialling is getting better and better all the time, so I'm happy," she added.

'The first 15 miles we were really flying, we went out really hard'

Woods now has her sights set on competing in the marathon at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, as well as the 1500m and 5000m.

In the men's race, 29 competitors lined up at the start, while only a disappointing three racers went off in the women's event, with Brit Sarah Piercy the only other athlete.

Television presenter and

former Paralympic basketball player Ade Adepitan made his marathon debut in the race.

Speaking directly after the race, he said: "I can't even tell you what hurts, I think even my DNA hurts!"

He said the experience had increased his respect for his fellow competitors "tenfold".

He said: "No matter how fit you are, no matter who you are, in order to do as well as you want to do you have to go through pain. I think you've got to have a special mindset to know that and be prepared to do that."

Adepitan, who had to qualify as an elite athlete, completed the course in a time of 2:31:55.

He said that the support he received on his way around the course was "brilliant" and "unbelievable".

"They helped me for the last ten miles. If it wasn't for their cheering, I don't think I would have made it."



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RESULTS

WOMEN'S WHEELCHAIR



1 Woods, Shelly (GBR) 1:50:40
(above and far right)
2 Porcellato, Francesca (ITA) 1:59:46
3 Piercy, Sarah (GBR) 2:41:18

MEN'S WHEELCHAIR



1 Weir, David (GBR) 1:30:49
(above and right)
2 Fearnley, Kurt (AUS) 1:30:50
3 Mendoza, Saul (MEX) 1:33:46
4 Van Dyk, Ernst (RSA) 1:33:46
5 Yasuoka, Choke (JPN) 1:33:50

MINI-MARATHON

Boys 14-17

1 Clarke, Aiden (GBR) 0:14:11
2 Lucker, Daniel (GBR) 0:14:27
3 Newton, James (GBR) 0:14:28

Girls 14-17

1 Hunt, Louise (GBR) 0:15:42
2 Harding, Rebecca (GBR) 0:17:28
3 Coleman, Rebekah (GBR) 0:26:22

Boys 11-13

1 Binstead, Jack (GBR) 0:18:27
Girls 11-13
1 Martin, Colette (GBR) 0:18:37



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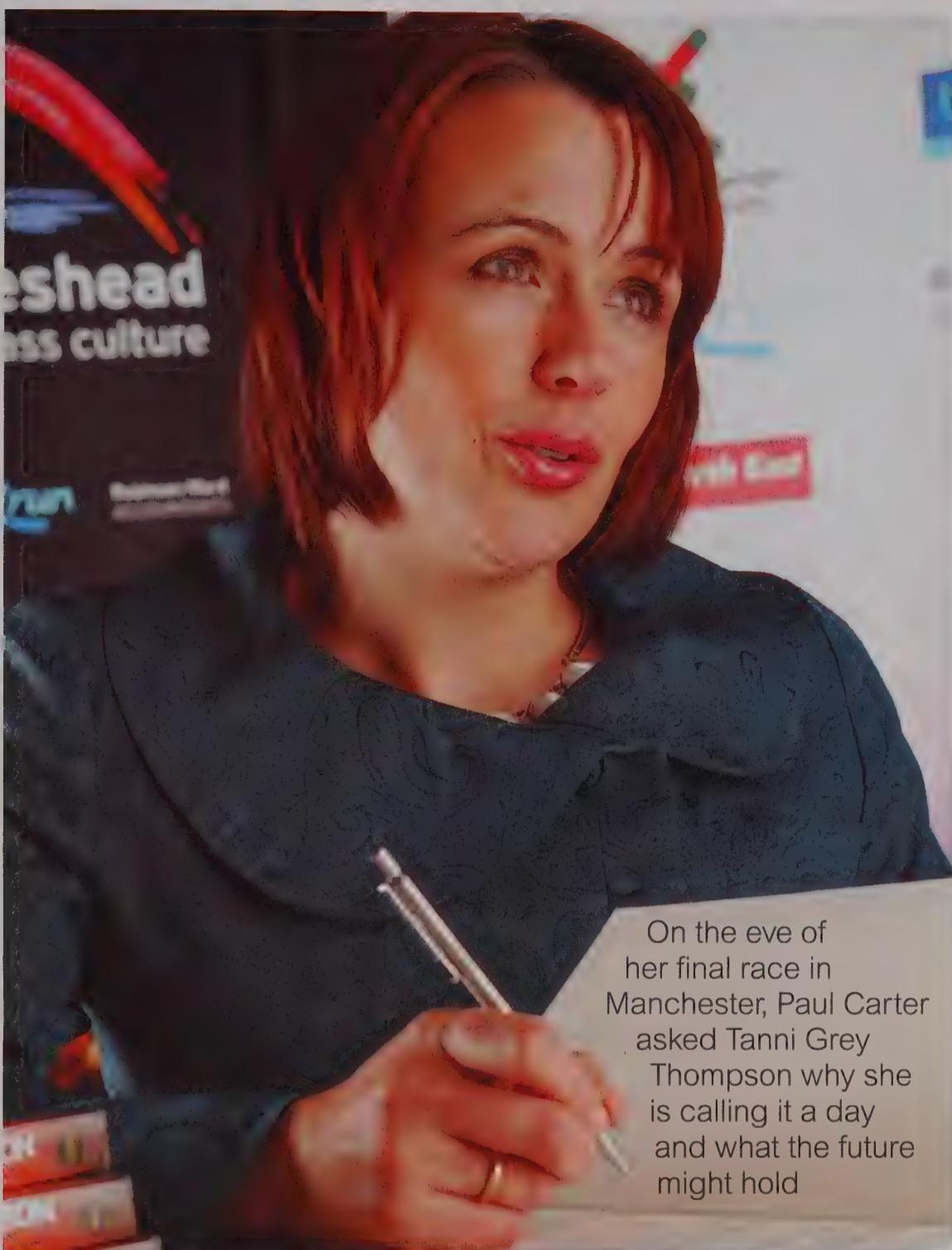
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Following Dame Tanni Grey Thompson's retirement from Paralympic sport we look back at her unparalleled career. We interview the first lady of Paralympic sport and then we ask figures from the worlds of disability rights, sport and politics how they view her legacy



On the eve of her final race in Manchester, Paul Carter asked Tanni Grey Thompson why she is calling it a day and what the future might hold

Tanni draws the line

"I'm tired, I've just had enough, really," says Dame Tanni Grey Thompson. After a 20-year career, Britain's most successful Paralympic athlete ever is preparing to retire from competitive athletics.

Dame Tanni Grey Thompson DBE, to give her her full title, was preparing to compete in her last race at the Paralympic World Cup in Manchester when we met.

She is refreshingly honest about her reasons for choosing to bow out now – there is no place for tired clichés around "going out at the top" in Tanni's world.

"I stopped enjoying it," she says, frankly. "Everything about it; the training, the competing, the being away from my family.

"I also hurt a lot more these days. I get a lot of pain in my shoulders, and I want to make

sure I'm still able to transfer [from my wheelchair] in 20 years time, which if I carry on racing for another couple of years, I'm not sure I'll be able to do."

Born Carys Davina Grey in 1969, the nickname "Tanni" stuck after her two-year-old sister tried to call her "tiny" but pronounced it wrong. Now 37, Tanni is a mother herself to five-year-old daughter Carys.

During her illustrious career, she went on to win 11 Paralympic gold medals, including the 100m in Athens, which she describes as her "greatest achievement", "particularly as my 800m was so awful". She also won the London Marathon six times.

She says the decision to retire came when she realised that she couldn't totally commit herself any longer to the training regime necessary to compete effectively at the top level.

"I've always been about going out to win and not just making up the numbers," she says. "Once I realised I didn't want to do Beijing, everything after that became a lot easier."

Despite this admission, it's clear that Tanni hasn't lost any of her energy – her love and passion for competition shines through when she speaks, and she concedes that it will continue to have a role to play in her life after retirement.

"I may do some marathons in Europe," she says, "but it will only be for fun. I'll probably still do some road racing for a laugh, and carry on trying to beat my husband! [Tanni's husband Ian is also a former Paralympic wheelchair athlete, and her coach.] I've beaten him on the road once, but never on the track," she says.

Speaking just two weeks before the World Cup, Tanni

admits that it will be a difficult time, and is only competing in the 200m and not the 400m, as "emotionally I can't do two races".

"I feel sick thinking about it," she says. "I'm fit and training well, I just don't want to be in tears on the start line."

So is there any chance of a late change of heart? "Absolutely not, no way," she says emphatically. "This really is it for me."

Despite her adamance that her competitive days are over, Tanni says she will still be "around and involved" in disability sport behind the scenes.

She is currently coaching wheelchair athlete Brian Alldis, and hopes to pass on some of her knowledge to other up-and-coming athletes looking towards Beijing and London.

There has been much speculation about what the future holds for Tanni away from the sporting world.

While a career in the media would seem the obvious direction, recent stories have suggested that a move into the world of politics may be in the pipeline. But despite being pressed, she is non-committal on the subject.

All she will say is: "I have a politics degree, and I've always been interested in politics. That's certainly the way to make things change."

Considering her advisory and ambassadorial role for the London Olympics and Paralympics, is there any possibility that we could have Tanni as sports minister in 2012?

"I don't know, there's a long way to go before that could happen. I'd have to get a seat, be elected, and besides, I quite like our current sports minister!"

Tanni also says that she may now dedicate more of her time to campaigning on disability rights, something she says she is a "strong believer" in.

However, Tanni says the reason she has never been seen as a prominent disability rights campaigner stems from her early years and her subsequent involvement in sport.

"The problem is, when I was a teenager, I never understood disability politics – I used to use the word 'normal', " she says. "I felt wrong getting involved in things I didn't understand."

Since then, Tanni says sport has overtaken her life, and subsequently she has always focused on using sport "as a means of challenging people's attitudes".

The so called "super-crip"

argument is something which has attracted Tanni some degree of criticism from areas of the disability community, with some arguing that the portrayal of successful Paralympians such as Tanni sets unattainable targets for the majority of disabled people.

Tanni is typically pragmatic, and the issue is clearly something she has some empathy for.

"I think that's a really interesting argument," she says. "I think everyone has different ways of doing things – as my grandmother used to say, 'There are lots of ways to skin a cat.'"

She is aware of the criticism she has received, but she believes that sport is a "useful way of changing people's perceptions".

"Would people say Steve Redgrave is a bad influence on young people?" she asks.

So does she have any advice for rising stars like Shelly Woods, who many people are touting as the 'next Tanni Grey Thompson'?

"I think calling her the next Tanni Grey Thompson is disrespectful to her and her achievements," she says. "I think she's very talented. She has a very strong personality and just needs to stay focused."

But she warns that British disability sport cannot afford to rest on its laurels.

"The world is changing. We don't know what the Chinese are doing, so Beijing is going to be a big challenge."

Whatever challenges lie ahead for Tanni Grey Thompson, she will undoubtedly face it with humour, enthusiasm, and commitment.

WHO IS SHE?

Dame Tanni Grey Thompson DBE is 37, and lives in Redcar with her husband Ian and five-year-old daughter Carys. She is Britain's most successful Paralympic athlete, winning 11 gold medals, three silvers and one bronze during her 20-year career. She has also won six London Marathon titles. She has received 24 honorary degrees from various universities, and has won a string of sporting awards. She was made an MBE in 1992, an OBE in 2000 and a dame in 2005.

Tanni: the final verdict

We asked campaigners, politicians and sports stars for their assessment of Dame Tanni Grey Thompson's achievements and the legacy she will leave behind as she retires from professional sport

Rachel Hurst, disability rights campaigner: "I was glad that as the years have

passed she has got lots more rights-orientated. Early on she didn't understand the obstacles that were there for other disabled people but she has been fighting the rights battle.

I think it is very important that disabled sportspeople should have a high profile and I am delighted that it has happened to her and that it has rubbed off on others.

"But still, disabled sports people do not get the same status as non-disabled sports people. The point is that disabled sports do not create the same celebrities that non-disabled sports do, with the exception of Tanni. There are others to take her place and I hope that they do. Sport is extremely important. There is no difference [to anything else] except that the obstacles to achieving are very much worse.

"They should have higher status, not because they are brave, but because they are having to overcome all these barriers."

Phil Lane, chief executive of the British Paralympic Association: "Tanni set a standard for

Paralympic sport which raised the bar for everyone. It meant her competitors had to train and prepare at levels previously unthought-of, just to be competitive alongside her.

"As an athlete she is respected by her peers within Paralympic sport, but perhaps more importantly, by the whole of the sporting community, who recognise her as a fierce competitor, but also as someone who has always prepared meticulously for her sport.

"For me that speaks volumes about where Tanni has taken disability sport and she has broken down huge barriers during her time as an athlete.

"She will be missed as the spearhead of Britain's challenge for medals in the Paralympic Games. But I am looking forward to working with her to take British Paralympic sport to



the next level of performance and recognition."

Lynn Jeffries, campaigner with the Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAN) and diversity consultant: "My overriding memory of her was when she won the BBC Sports Personality of the Year award, and they didn't have a ramp to get her on stage. I felt very disappointed that she didn't make more of it as it would have raised the issue.

"She could have pushed issues further, with the barriers that she faced. Having said that, I'm sure she would have been a role model for a lot of people, but not a political one. But there's nothing to say you have to be a campaigner, just because you are a disabled person."

Shelly Woods, Paralympic athlete: "I think she's always inspired people with

what she's achieved. Her performances, her world records, they say it all really. Other people have inspired me more though.

"Paralympic sport has a long way to go, but it's improved a lot, with the coverage of the London marathon and things like that. I definitely think she's raised the profile of Paralympic sport. The stuff that Tanni's done makes it a lot easier for athletes like me and David Weir now."

David Weir, Paralympic athlete: "Tanni's been great for the sport. She's pushed

Paralympic sport to new levels as a recognised sport. And it is an actual sport – we get up and we do the London Marathon, and actually train.

"Even though Tanni's retired, I'm sure she'll be behind the scenes, making sure 2012 is the best yet. She raised the profile of Paralympic sport 100 per cent. You look up to



people like Tanni [as an athlete], because of what she's achieved.

"She has spoken out. She's never hidden anything from the public about her disability. Coverage is getting better, but there is still a way to go with Paralympic sport, particularly in the way we are treated as athletes."

Mike Brace, president of the British Paralympic Association: "She has been a beacon of Paralympic sport, both in terms of her achievement and her professional approach.

"We've had comparatively few major ambassadors for disability sport, but she has fulfilled that role as well. She has also proved an inspiration to so many people, and her success has been clearly linked to the rise in Paralympic sport in Great Britain. We wouldn't have the same recognition for disability sport if Dame Tanni had not been competing and winning."

Dr Paul Darke, disabled academic and writer: "She is an exceptional

woman, who has done a great deal to raise the profile of the able wheelchair-user.

"She could always have been more political, and hopefully she now will. I am aware of a lot of criticism of her, but as a fellow 'biffy' [they both have spina bifida], I've always admired her.

"I think the future is probably much more interesting in terms of her being more vocal. I hope she is much more varied in her political opinions, I hope it's not just about the "good cripple", but she takes on the "bad cripple", the more marginalised sections of disabled society."

Lord (Sebastian) Coe, chairman of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games: "Tanni is our greatest Paralympic athlete, and her consistent medal-winning performances have made her an inspiration to young disabled athletes in the UK and throughout the world.

"She is a great ambassador for the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, and was part of our delegation to Singapore when we won the

Games. We wish Tanni all the best for her future career, and I know we will be working closely with her as our plans take shape for the London 2012 Paralympic Games."

Phil Friend, chair of RADAR and director of disability consultancy Minty and Friend: "I think she's done an enormous amount when it comes to disability sport.



"The subtle thing that's changed is that at the beginning she was being asked, 'Oh, what does your mum think?' and not about her training regimes. She was asked questions that other, non-disabled athletes wouldn't be asked. She's helped people see that disabled athletes are every bit as committed as non-disabled athletes.

"More recently, she's begun to look at disability politics more. She's not just confined herself to being a first-class athlete. At the time of the BBC incident [the BBC's failure to provide a ramp when Dame Tanni came third in the Sports Personality of the Year], by being as dignified as she was, and not jumping up and shouting about it, she made

more of an impact.

"I think she was the first ever female wheelchair-user to be featured in *Hello!* magazine, and if you're appearing alongside David Beckham, something's going right."

Jon Burke,
an
Association
of Spina
Bifida and
Hydro-
cephalus
(ASBAH)



service-user: "I think the best thing Tanni ever did for disability sport was go on *A Question of Sport*. That put her on the same level as all the other sports people involved without any of the hype of portraying her as a Supercrip."

Jeremy Hunt
MP,
Conservative
spokesman
on disability
issues:

"Tanni Grey
Thompson is

an inspiration to the disability movement as she has defined herself by what she can do rather than what she cannot.

"She richly deserves the many accolades she has been awarded as she has brought wheelchair racing right into the

foreground of UK competitive sports. As we look towards the Paralympics in 2012, I hope that disabled young people all over the UK will be inspired by her achievements and be motivated to get involved in sports at whatever level."

Anne
McGuire
MP, disabled
people's
minister:
"Tanni Grey
Thompson's
retirement

from wheelchair sport is truly the end of an era. She is not only one of this country's most successful athletes, but a fantastic ambassador for disabled and non-disabled people alike.

"Her talent and determination have enabled her to excel as a sportswoman – and her numerous awards and records are a testament to this.

But further than that, her drive and commitment in her work with charities and the community has meant that Tanni has become a household name and someone who has helped raise the profile of disabled people in recent years. I'm sure that we will continue to hear Tanni's name for many years to come."



Danny
Alexander
MP, Liberal
Democrat
spokesman
on disability
issues: "I



admire her greatly, not only for her prowess on the athletics track but also for the way she has channelled her experience and

dedication into her work with sports bodies across the UK, especially to get more young people involved in sport.

"In both arenas, Dame Tanni has been a real inspiration to British athletes competing across all disciplines, in both disability sport and non-disability sport. She will be much missed from competition I am sure, but I

hope we will continue to see her through her presenting and broadcasting work.

"I'd especially like to pass on my best wishes for her work with UK sports organisations, as well as coaching young athletes, some of whom I am sure we will be proud to see competing in the Beijing and London Paralympics."

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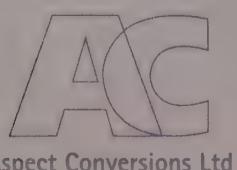
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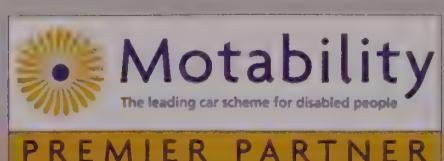


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PREMIER PARTNER

Angling for the best shot

As the summer holidays approach, photographer Mark Davidson offers advice on essential camera equipment and how to capture the best images

I started to take photography seriously just under three years ago when I purchased a digital SLR (single lens reflex) camera.

I'd always taken a compact 35mm camera with me on my many travels. But, although I faithfully recorded my impressions in a journal, I never captured the sights through a lens because I never thought I'd be able to do it well enough.

During this period, my eye was caught by the digital SLRs coming onto the market. The only reason I didn't buy one was because I thought the cerebral palsy affecting the right-hand side of my body might make operating it a problem.

'Faced with iconic buildings you have to think of new shots'

On previous journeys, whenever I used my compact camera, I just turned it upside down to shoot the image because it made it easier for me to use my left hand.

And it's true that a shutter-release cable can be a good compromise for those who, like me, have difficulties holding a camera steady. I can press the shutter with my left hand while maintaining a steady grip.

Another useful accessory is a photography bean bag. You can use it to rest the camera on a fence, for example, without it getting damaged, and it provides a firm base for steady shots.

If you need to use bigger lenses, then a monopod, which screws into the lens and rests on a single spike on the ground, or a tripod, is a necessity.

A monopod is ideal if you need to travel lightly, but require a degree of support, and it can be packed away compactly. But a tripod provides the best support and allows the greatest variety in picture-taking. Because it allows you to keep the shutter open for a longer period, it can create more unusual images.

Apart from the camera, the most important piece of kit is a suitable bag. A number of manufacturers now make a large variety of padded backpacks and shoulder bags.

When on my travels, I snap the same monuments and landscapes as every tourist, but I try to find slightly different angles. Faced with iconic

buildings like the Taj Mahal or the Egyptian pyramids you have to think of new ways to capture them. You might get up before dawn to see a beautiful sunrise behind a temple, or wait for the sun to disappear over the horizon, so the warm, rich, red evening glow adds colour to buildings in the foreground.

Ensure your camera is always ready. You never know when you will see something that catches your eye, and that spontaneous shot may be the best one. Ensure you have enough battery life and plenty of memory cards handy.

Engage with the locals. A few sweets or pens can bring a smile to a child's face. Strike up a conversation. If you gain a person's trust you are more likely to get a close-range shot, capturing all their interesting wrinkles and age marks. You never know – they may even pose in their national dress.

One common mistake is to wait until an area is clear of both local people and tourists. Yet someone near a building can give it a sense of scale. If there are religious sensitivities make sure it's OK to snap away in places of public worship.

So, should you use a compact camera or an SLR? Compact cameras are easy to carry and ideal for point-and-shoot situations. But if you require more variety, then you need an SLR. It has interchangeable lenses which give more control over composition, lighting and shutter speed. On the downside, the equipment is heavier and overall costs are higher.

An issue arising with digital cameras concerns the number of megapixels needed. A six-megapixel camera will print up to A3 size without any loss of quality; for standard 7x5 prints, three megapixels are adequate.

If you have a natural flair, picture libraries or magazines may buy your images. You could even set up your own website.

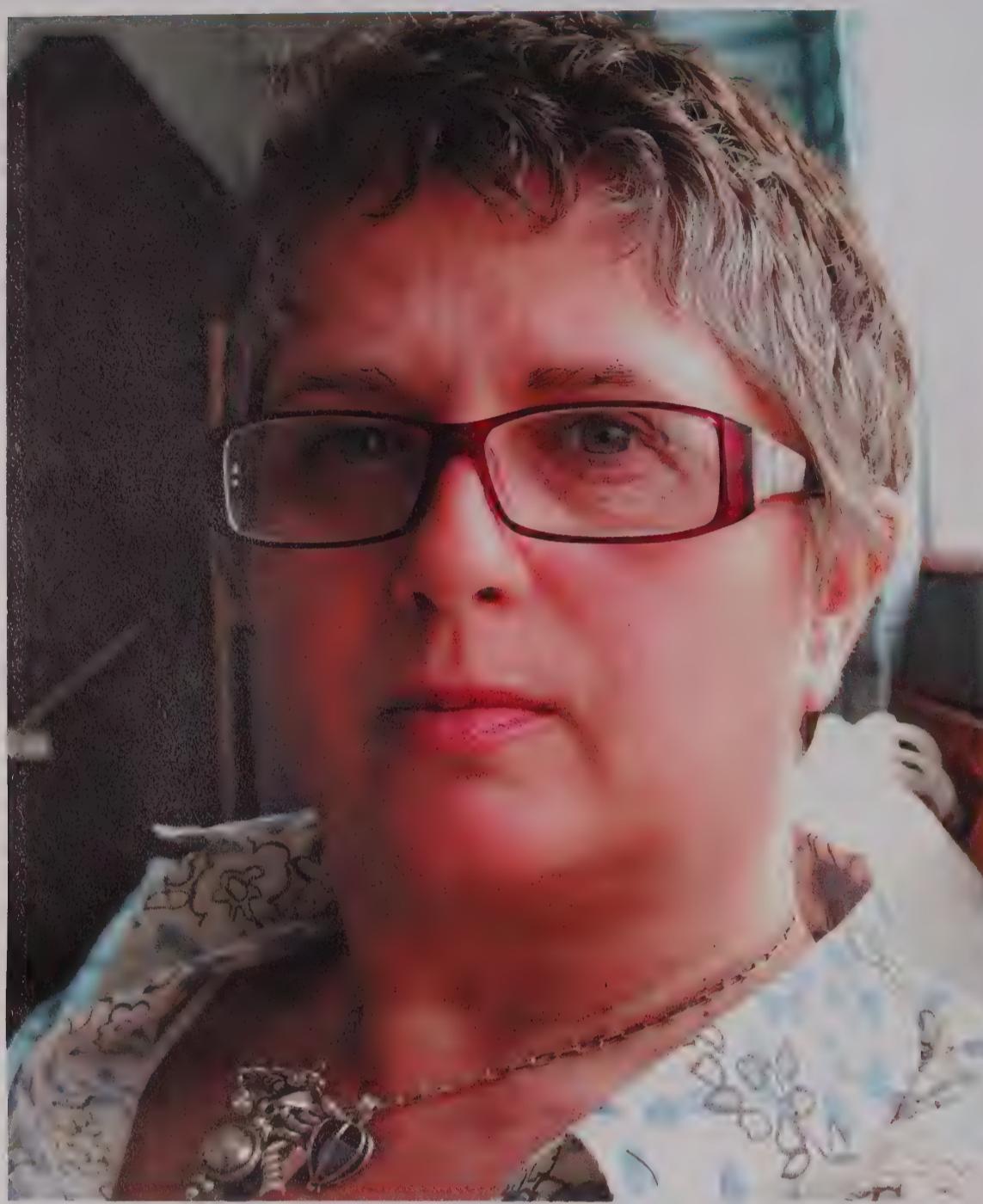
Equipment cost

1. Compact digital camera: from £60
2. Digital SLR: from £380
3. Monopods: from £15
4. Tripods: from £25
5. Shutter release cables: from £10
6. Bean bags: from £10
7. Camera bags: from £20
8. Memory cards: from £10



Shooting party: Some of Mark's favourite images, clockwise from top, on top of the Brandenburg gate in Berlin; an Indian boatman on the Ganges; the British Museum reading room; Nepalese silk dyes; St Petersburg's frozen Neva river

'Poverty is a state of mind'



In the sixth part of our Poverty Files, Elizabeth Choppin speaks to a disabled woman who manages to survive on an £8 a week food budget, and is writing a book about her experiences

Even the most frugal person might argue that a food budget of £8 a week is a little extreme.

What has become clear to Clarissa James since she became disabled nine years ago is that there is often no limit to how extreme living conditions can be – particularly as a single person.

Until 1998, Clarissa, from Surrey, worked as a butler for the Government Hospitality Fund and as the managing director of her own music publishing company. But as a result of a work accident, in which she sustained severe head and spinal injuries, Clarissa has since been living on disability benefits and has lost everything – including her company.

She can no longer work due to physical and cognitive memory problems, and has rejected the compensation offered in court as she feels it is completely inadequate.

Clarissa scrapes by with little more than a pound or two left over each week after paying out for physical rehabilitation and her meagre living costs.

Her single-bedroom council bungalow has no landline, computer or television, concrete floors and no working oven. Food, soap and toilet rolls are considered "luxuries" if there is any emergency expenditure, or even a slight fluctuation in other costs.

"I am an ordinary woman surviving the unimaginable," Clarissa says. "Every day is a tightrope walk when it comes to surviving, and it is such a fragile existence."

Before the accident, Clarissa was active in dance, off-road cycling, ice skating and travelling – and she is committed to retaining as much of her mobility as possible through rigorous physical rehabilitation.

There is a long list of rehab

that Clarissa feels she needs to improve her health, but can't afford because it is not offered on the NHS. She says her current course of rehab, both from the NHS and out of her own pocket, is helping her to remain a non-wheelchair user – and she is willing to sacrifice anything, including food, to make sure she keeps improving. Without the rehab, her condition will deteriorate, she says.

"I will get it by hook or by crook. I will do everything for my rehab on my spine. I'm not prepared to accept somebody else telling me, 'You're not having it,'" she says.

It is this unwavering resolve that helps Clarissa live with the fact that some days she cannot afford to eat.

So how does she survive on £8 a week, and sometimes less, for food? "It used to be worse," she says. "You have to – you just have to. If, for example, they do

two for one and it's a good deal, then I'll buy that and divide it into four meals. You have to be creative, but it's tough. It's really, really tough – but my health comes first."

Like some other disabled subjects in our Poverty Files, Clarissa relies heavily on the kindness of friends and family to gift her food parcels, clothes or rare luxuries like a cup of coffee.

One of the frustrations, she explains, is having been repeatedly told that she does not meet the criteria for industrial injuries benefit.

"The benefits system steals every ounce of dignity you have," she says. "They basically said, 'You're not getting any money.'

"It's so degrading to have to beg somebody to put a value on your life and say, 'Please help me.' I will never go back again. Never. The experience is just – I can't handle it," she says, with slightly teary eyes.

"They're not going to change their minds. After the first time, I believed an error was made (over her benefit claim), which they always do. I sent in a new lot of x-rays that I didn't have before. When the answer came back and was still a no – I thought, 'OK, that's fine. Now I have to move on.'"

Clarissa feels that people in the benefits system are at the mercy of assessment boards which lack the necessary expertise.

"You wouldn't go to your GP for open heart surgery because he's just not specialist enough. So why go into a panel with people who don't understand muscular-skeletal problems or brain injury problems when they don't have that specialist knowledge? They have a generic knowledge but they don't have specialist knowledge. To me, it's just so unfair – but if that's the

'If they do two for one and it's a good deal, I'll buy that and divide it into four meals'

system, then that's the system."

Clarissa says it has taken years to get used to the indifference of people who can't understand that true poverty really exists, such as the time when she asked a dental receptionist if she could be put on a payment plan for a £4 visit.

"I said, 'Send me an invoice – I'll send you a pound a month.' She just smirked and laughed. The reality is that

Ins and outs

WEEKLY INCOME:

(some figures are approximate)

Incapacity benefit –

£180/fortnightly (£90/week)

Disability living allowance –

£148/month (£34/week)

Total monthly: £538

Weekly total: £124

WEEKLY EXPENDITURE:

(some figures are approximate)

Water – £3.50

Heating and hot water – £10

Rent – £3.50

Electricity – £3.50

Council tax – £1.25

Mobile – £2.50

Catalogue payments (for big household items) – £8.75

Credit card payments – £5

Fish food – £1

Household products – £3

Personal products – £4.50

Vitamins – £2.50

Spinal rehabilitation – £25

Cranial sacral therapy – £15

Brain injury rehabilitation – £7.80

Printing (15p/page at library) – £3

Postage – £6

Debt repayments – £3

Magazine – £1

Newspaper (two per week) – £1.40

Rehabilitation equipment – £5

Store card – £1.25

Food (sometimes less) – £8

Total: £125.50

there have been moments where I haven't had any money. Most of the time, I don't have any money.

"Don't get me wrong, there have been one or two absolute angels out there who have tried to bend over backwards to help me or at least guide me. But on the whole, people just don't care," she says.

Despite these setbacks, Clarissa has set goals for herself, including writing two books about her experiences with spinal cord and brain injuries.

Each day, she goes to the library to work for two hours on her writing, or whatever letters, benefits forms or research she has to do to get her out of her current circumstances.

"Poverty is just a state of mind. I am broke and have no money through circumstances," she says. "I assume this is just temporary. I have to look at it like that because if I thought that this was the rest of my life, it would be a much harder thing to survive than what I've survived already."

**Clarissa's name has been changed*

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Parent of child with cerebral palsy

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Our phone line is open 9am-7pm on weekdays and 10am-2pm on Saturdays. It is closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays. You can leave a phone message outside of these hours.

If you prefer to write our address is:

Scope Response
PO Box 833
Milton Keynes
MK12 5NY

Time to get equal

scope

*About cerebral palsy
For disabled people achieving equality*

Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the acting editor, John Pring, Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW, minicom: 020 7619 7332, fax: 020 7619 7331, email: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk. Please include your telephone number.

Finding a new purpose

I'm a reader of *Disability Now*, disabled myself with MS and a full-time wheelchair-user. I wanted to respond to Christopher Burke's comments in web watch (*DN, May, page 33*) and to tell you about the opportunities that *Don'tDumpThat* can offer to disabled people working as volunteers from their homes.

Don'tDumpThat is a national non-profit re-use initiative dedicated to bringing together people who have things to give away, with those who would like them; reducing waste, saving money, conserving energy and preserving the Earth for future generations.

Today we operate 124 forums across the UK, each offering local people the means to give away what they no longer want, and each manned by volunteer moderators. We have a membership of over 12,000, and need more volunteers.

As an entirely web-based organisation we can offer disabled people worthwhile and

rewarding voluntary opportunities helping the environment, almost whatever their disability.

If Christopher hasn't already been offered an opportunity then I would like to offer him the opportunity working for *Don'tDumpThat* as a volunteer. Ed Jones, founder trustee, *Don'tDumpThat* www.dontdumpthat.com

Editor's note: Ed Jones' details have been passed on

Driver deserved to get the sack

I was disgusted to read (*DN, May, page 4*) that a delivery driver refused to accept the disabled person's signature because she could only hold the pen in her mouth. Even though she had an apology from the company, in my view he should be sacked from his job.

Jean Muggeridge, Great Bookham, Surrey

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Stannah
The Stairlift People

Sending out mixed messages

I would like to raise the issue of toilet facilities available for disabled people at some public venues.

My wife (who is a wheelchair-user) and I have on many occasions come across the situation where the disabled toilets are situated in either the general ladies or gents toilet units, at such venues as the Birmingham National Indoor Arena, *right* (although they now have two RADAR unisex toilets).

This is fine if the carer and the disabled person are of the same sex, but useless if it is husband and wife.

We have also noticed that many of the toilet cubicles are fitted with low-level pedestals,



that are not even wheelchair seat level, thus preventing one from sliding from the wheelchair on to the toilet, which means the disabled person has to be lifted on or

off the toilet, which in some cases can be a mammoth task. Have any other readers come across these problems?

Mr P F Schofield, Market Harborough, Leicestershire

Work at home needs hard look

Both my daughter and I cannot work in a designated workplace because of medical conditions.

I have tried to create awareness that despite this we are both capable of doing a job, but it would have to be from home. I suspect many others are in a similar situation. Political parties haven't bothered to reply, government organisations haven't a clue, or just do not want to be involved, and charity organisations haven't got the resources.

Starting my own business is not feasible, which is why I

undertook to raise the issue. Think of the costs employers could save, and the millions the government would get back via taxes, etc, especially as it has an ongoing campaign to get people back to work. How many of your readers would, like us, jump at the chance to be able to work and get a bit more money coming into the household? How many employers would, if made aware, be willing to look hard at this issue?

What do your readers think?

Clive McGrory, by email

Criticism was 'cruel'

I think Ivy Broadhead's crit of Gill Hicks' book *One Unknown* is unnecessarily cruel. Maybe Gill is not a writer, but it doesn't hurt to try, especially to pass on experiences that may help and encourage others. Especially in our genre.

Imagine the awful experience of a few seconds changing your life for ever, from one thing to something completely different.

I'm glad Gill found time and courage among the pain and anxiety to put it into words so that others may benefit.

No, one need not buy the book, one need not buy any recommended book, but when one is a critic of a specialist type of book, one is not criticising standards of writing, and one is not buying Shakespeare.

Eunice Wilson, London SW6

Consideration for short-term impairments

Following hip surgery, I was on crutches for six weeks, with a further six weeks on sticks. Two weeks after coming out of hospital, I was taken to B&Q by my husband to select wallpaper. Unable to walk, my husband parked in a disabled bay close to the entrance (we have never done so before).

On entering the shop I was offered a wheelchair, courtesy of the shop. Whilst in the shop, I used the disabled loo and had a coffee in the cafe. On

returning to the car, we had a £40 parking charge. The offence being parking in a disabled bay without a blue badge.

However, as I'm sure you know, one has to have a permanent disability to qualify for a badge.

However, at the time and for some weeks, I was disabled. Is any consideration given to the short-term disabled? If not, surely this is discrimination.

Via email

Wheeled around

In response to Eunice Wilson's letter, "Small is Beautiful" (*DN, May, letters*), I must stick up for supermarkets. Only sometimes do I need a wheelchair but I've always found an assistant to wheel me around, or do my shopping. This has happened in three supermarkets near Maidstone.

J Hitchen, Kent

A wordy debate

Re: your article referring to Loquax (*DN, January, backchat*). As a member of Loquax, I was shocked at the wording. As someone who is not a couch potato and who has never parked in a disabled space, never mind entered your competitions, I am insulted. Talk about tarring everybody with the same brush.

Sarah Jones, by email

I was sad to see your January entry (*DN, January, backchat*). I have been a Loquax member for many years. It is a good site but, sadly, an element has crept in and your comments about it are succinct and pertinent.

I lost my disabled mum two years ago and it grieves me to see people entering competitions such as your site run, when they have no need of the prize. I do make comments on the Loquax site about people who enter competitions purely to win to sell, because in my view that is morally/ethically wrong.

If you don't want that prize for your family or friends, don't enter. I hope your competition winners are all genuine people who need the prizes. I wanted to say how I have enjoyed trawling your site, even though I currently have no need for it. I wish I had found it when my mum was alive!

Elizabeth Rodgers, by email

Blight on Keswick's beauty

I read with interest the letter from Mary Heron (DN, May, letters) regarding the parking problems she endured on her trip to the Lakes.

My wife and I are regular visitors to the Keswick area and I can confirm that this area is notorious for disabled parking problems.

I was fined £60 (later waived) at the lakeside car park at Keswick. We have been holidaying at the same residence for some years now, which of course caters for all types of disabled people, and the visitors' books are littered with comments regarding badge owners getting tickets.

The problem, of course, is the lack of or non-existent policing of these systems (which should be national) and inappropriate fines.

However, unless immediate drastic action is taken, the parking/blue badge situation will become completely pointless with those most in need suffering as usual.

I could go on for ever, but to conclude, I say to those visiting the Lakes, beware of parking wardens.

Michael Higham, Mansfield Woodhouse, Nottinghamshire

I am perplexed by the fact that Mrs Heron from Bangor received a fixed penalty fine while parked in a disabled slot in a Keswick car park.

The regulations that apply to the use of disks state clearly that they are only required when parking on yellow lines or disabled bays that have a time limit.

She is right to be puzzled by the use of these disks in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland have no use for them, believing that the blue badge is sufficient proof of disability.

However, the downside continues to be the number of people who abuse the system by the fraudulent use of the badge and the ease with which such badges can be obtained.

Perhaps the blue badge is too vulnerable and it might be that something more permanent such as a special number plate is required.

Maybe your readers could come up with an alternative that would stop the theft of the badge and eliminate its misuse by abusers of the system, many of whom can be found regularly in the car parks of the nation's supermarkets.

George Wilkie, Hemingford Grey, Cambridgeshire

web watch

Have your say and join others chatting at www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Tony Blair is going. Please let me know what has Tony done for you? ...sorry, but I think Blair's been the best laugh I've had for years.

Robert

He shoulda gone nine years, 11 months and 29 days ago.
dogposhpaws

If I could run round and do a dance I would, but hey ho, don't fancy his replacement much either.

Liz Williams

Blair keeps a pension equal to his wages of £152,000 a year, he keeps a security guard and protection and a vehicle for the rest of his life, as does his family. Not bad for somebody who says we are cheats.

Robert

Well, I think he's made lots of very bad decisions and I'm disappointed that he turned the Labour party into a watered-down, conservative yuppie-fest, but while the DDA may have lots of holes in it, at least it exists so there is something to build on. Don't forget the previous government threw those same proposals out on the grounds that it was "too much money to spend on a very small section of society". At least now when disabled people are being discriminated against there is a law that has been broken and we can take someone to task about it. The bad side of Blair as far as disabled people are concerned is that for all the money they have spent trying to look like they are doing something they have not improved people's lot as far as getting more people into long-term employment and tackling society's attitudes to disability.

Webwych

Glad to see the back of this spin merchant.
Onelegman

backchat

Having started to believe we'd seen the last of sickly sweet "triumph over tragedy" stories, especially in relation to disability sport, *The Times* cheerily comes along to set backchat straight.

While waiting for the start of the swimming at the Paralympic World Cup in Manchester, backchat nearly choked on his free coffee and cake when reading the headline "Courage of golden girl willing and able to do anything", which clearly isn't true. She's not able to spot and drown patronising journalists, obviously.

Still in Manchester, Saturday night saw the Nationwide Achievement Awards for sports across the Paralympic World Cup. Problem was, being the night before the athletics, half of the winners were in bed and so, in great awards ceremony tradition, "could not be present to collect their award".

That included the guest of honour, a certain Dame Tanni Grey Thompson, who had to make a discreet exit after dinner in order to make her 10pm curfew...

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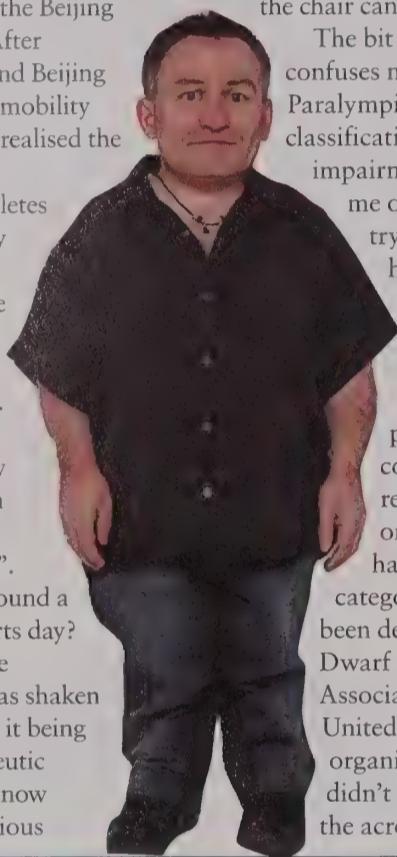
In April's *Disability Now*, I wrote about my recent trip to China. This time next year, things will be really gearing up for the Beijing Paralympics. After travelling around Beijing on my electric mobility scooter, I have realised the first event for wheelchair athletes will be actually getting to the Olympic venue – dropped kerbs are not commonplace. Maybe this could be a new demonstration sport: the "obstacle race".

Does that sound a bit school sports day? Thankfully, the Paralympics has shaken off the idea of it being simply therapeutic activity and is now considered serious

athletics. No longer do ignorant people think wheelchair racing is unfair, because it is all down to how fast the person pushing the chair can run.

The bit that always confuses me with the Paralympics is the classification of impairments. It reminds me of someone trying too hard: having "Do Not Touch" signs in Braille, for example.

Even for people with my condition, being restricted growth, or dwarfism, we have three sub-categories. These have been developed by the Dwarf Athletic Association of the United Kingdom. Great organisation, but they didn't think through the acronym. Read out



Just getting to the Paralympics could prove as challenging as the events, says Simon Minty

aloud, "DAAUK" gives a completely different message.

One set of dorks I've recently encountered are those random people who try to touch me as I walk down the street, believing I am a leprechaun. Ironically, it is at that exact moment that their luck runs out.

Recently I've made a habit of looking a bit dorkish myself. During my trip, I had a seven-

'A 4mph scooter is not quite in the same league as Lewis Hamilton'

hour layover at Hong Kong airport. Trying to get some sleep, I managed to grab two seats in the packed airport lounge. I eventually dozed off.

When I awoke four hours later, the 200 people around me when I fell asleep had disappeared. I got up, dazed and confused. It was deserted. I then noticed the area had been cordoned off with red "Danger" tape. Goodness knows what threat I posed. Or, if it wasn't me, why didn't they wake me up too?

I then went to check-in, but the airport authorities refused permission for me to drive my scooter to the gate. Maybe I was seen as a danger; but a 4mph mobility scooter is not quite in the same league as Lewis Hamilton in a Formula 1 car.

I refused to give it up, so we compromised and a security official "pushed" me on my now switched-off scooter. Once out of eyesight of check-in, I offered to turn it on, but the official refused. A hundred metres later, as his breathing grew steadily heavier, he begged me to turn it on! From that point on, I pretended not to accelerate and he pretended to push 125kg deadweight with just two fingers.

And I confirmed the myth that disabled people only go as fast as the person behind them can push.

* For details of future Abnormally Funny People gigs, visit www.abnormallyfunnypeople.com

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WORLD VIEW

MARTINA PUSCHKE

We need an independent European network of disabled women to push for equality



The 60 million disabled women in Europe do not yet have equal opportunities to participate in the community.

They are often unemployed and face lifelong poverty.

Birth control and family planning are very difficult, because of barriers in the health system.

A lot of disabled women become victims of sexual violence (approximately 76 per cent), but there is a lack of barrier-free shelters and other ways of helping them.

These are just some examples of the everyday discrimination faced by disabled women in Europe.

European countries are growing ever closer, with European Union (EU) policy becoming ever more important.

For example, European anti-discrimination directives have been particularly helpful in establishing rights for disabled women and men. But there is much more that can be done.

Women and disabled people should be considered in all regulations and directives within the EU (not just those that specifically relate to women, or disabled people).

We need action to improve the quality of life of disabled women all over Europe.

And European Union members

need to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

So what is the best way for us to achieve these objectives?

Disability federations in individual EU member states have not thought enough about women's issues. And the specific situation of disabled women is not given anywhere near enough consideration by women's organisations. Not all European countries have specific national networks of disabled women.

There is also a lack of resources for European campaigning work on top of national lobbying work.

Martina Puschke is director of Association Weibernetz, Germany's nationwide lobby for women with disabilities

Because of this situation, issues affecting disabled women in Europe are not being properly addressed at national level.

There is a lot of knowledge about European policy within the European Disability Forum and there is a European Union women's committee.

Within the European women's lobby, disabled women are working with and for organisations such as Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) or Fimotic, which also has a women's network. These networks are important.

But women's groups and networks are merely sub-groups within all these organisations and issues concerning disabled women are seen as issues among many others.

This is why we need an independent European network of disabled women, to carry out campaigning work independently of other organisations and to put women's issues on the agenda.

In our new network (launched last month at a conference in Germany but as yet unnamed), we will collect the experiences and demands of disabled women, so that we can all have one voice in Europe.

The importance of having one voice was highlighted when we were working on the UN

Convention. At the meetings in New York, Europe expressed itself with one voice.

The network will be funded by organisations including DPI, Weibernetz and other European associations for disabled women.

The setting up of a strong network of disabled women in Europe to campaign for our demands is an ambitious aim.

However, we feel that it is worth the effort! Join us in this European network.

*For more information in German and English, visit www.weibernetz.de

GPS tracking systems: stigma or support?

Tahir Idris says GPS technology should be used to find people with learning difficulties who are in trouble, but Andrew Lee says such schemes could rob people of their independence

"It is designed to allow them to live as normal a life as possible"

Places for People is committed to enabling its customers to live as independently as possible in the community.

This principle caused us to explore the possibility of developing a "location finder" for people who, either because of their age, or learning difficulties, could be at risk when away from their homes.

We have developed this Global Positioning System (GPS)-based technology to give customers choice and freedom. They are in control of it, and it is their choice when to use it.

It is not designed to keep tabs on people or monitor what they are doing, but to allow them to live as normal a life as possible with the added security of knowing they have the option of using the system should they require it.

We have taken the basic technology for "tagging" and developed it to put the customer in control. Tagging allows a person to be monitored whether they want to be or not. This system allows a person to independently alert trusted support if they feel the need.

The unit is pre-programmed

with an agreed list of contact numbers, and the customer has only to press a button on it to alert their designated carer that they may be in difficulty. The user and the carer will then have verbal communication, and the technology will give the location of the unit.

We see many potential uses of this technology, but in each case it will be the customer who decides if it is useful for them and who it will call.

We are installing this in homes on a scheme we are developing with the Department of Health for adults with learning difficulties who are moving out of the family home.

A range of assistive technology (AT) functions have been installed in response to individual needs, following a full assessment which involves social care, the customer and their family, and the Places for People AT team.

We see the non-intrusive location-finding technology as an important addition to the range of options we offer to our potentially vulnerable customers, and vital if we are to give them as independent a lifestyle as possible.

Tahir Idris, assistive technology manager, Places for People, a property management and development company, which also provides a range of social support services



JULIO ETCHART/CAREIMAGES.COM

"It can only increase the sense that many people with learning difficulties have that our lives are not our own"

It is with no small degree of concern that I found out about this scheme, being run by Places for People. Individuals



thought to be vulnerable will be given a piece of technology to wear around their necks, allowing them to alert carers to their location.

The aim is to enable independent living. The danger is a further reduction in the freedoms and privacies of people who are already too little in control of their own lives.

Places for People has highlighted the benefits of the scheme for older people with dementia but it is being piloted with people with learning difficulties. Assistive technology does have the potential to play a key role in enabling disabled people to live independently but this scheme smacks of disempowerment.

Tagging has strong associations with criminals. There is enough stigma around being a person with a learning difficulty without encouraging a negative view.

The idea we need to be tagged in case anything goes wrong places an immediate emphasis on what we can't do instead of what we can, or could, do.

People with learning difficulties can manage with the right support. A very real danger is that services rely too heavily on technology to rescue us if things go wrong without putting time and resources into equipping

individuals so we have the skills to go independently about the community in the first place.

If something goes wrong, we need to be able to cope ourselves. If a difficult situation arose, there would be a delay between the individual using the technology to alert their carers and their carers arriving to rescue them. What happens in between?

My greatest worry is that this technology places even more power in the hands of carers and family members who could abuse it to find out where we have been and when. It removes our right to freedom and space away from people we may not have chosen to have in our lives in the first place. It can only increase the sense that many people with learning difficulties have that our lives are not our own.

I am sure the scheme reflects good intentions. Unfortunately, it also reflects fears that surround people with learning difficulties of letting us live life, take risks and learn for ourselves. In order to truly empower us, we need other people to simply let go.

Andrew Lee, director, People First (Self Advocacy), an organisation run by and for people with learning difficulties

KEY NOTES ANDY RICKELL

It's time to remind politicians how important our rights are

Like us, politicians act on issues they care about. We need to make them care enough about disabled people's equal rights.

I think politicians care most about what they know from personal experience. Both Gordon Brown and David Cameron will act in support of parents of disabled children. Good.

Equally, this means it is important that more disabled people, who know the reality of disability discrimination, become politicians and public office holders.

Secondly, politicians care about some core values. We need to show how "equality" or "independent living" chimes with what they believe.

For instance, the main parties can match "independent living" with a

core value – perhaps "equality", "freedom", or "personal responsibility". We need to build on that basic support for independent living.

Thirdly, politicians, like us, want to be popular. So we must ensure they see popularity going hand in hand with championing disabled people's rights.

We need a two-pronged approach. We must provide evidence based on the reality of our lives, and show that improving our rights will make a real difference – if politicians are going to spend taxpayers' money. However, this is not enough on its own, because there are competing priorities.

We must also show the politicians that we have power – either through our own votes or by influencing the votes of others. We need to campaign

vocally, and get our interests aired assertively in the media. Otherwise, politicians will choose priorities they believe will have more impact on voters. Our current lack of a campaigning profile means disability gets a low political priority.

Our high-profile disability rights campaign of the mid-1990s meant the 1997 Labour manifesto had a commitment to our "comprehensive" rights.

Now, in pre-election season, is the time to remind politicians how important our rights are.

So support a major protest/demonstration about inadequate funding for social support, and the need for the independent living bill, outside Downing Street on 18 June (changed from 20 June). *Tel: 020 7619 7367, or email: andy.rickell@scope.org.uk

Andy is an executive director at Scope



GRAHAM BOOL PHOTOGRAPHY

Crocs, bees and bugs

This year's Naidex exhibition at Birmingham's NEC again provided an ideal showcase for new products for disabled people. Lucy Howard checks out some of the latest innovations

SHOWER

What? Evo is a new range of accessible showering systems, which won the best new product award at Naidex this year, an award voted for by visitors to the show. Functional and stylish, Evo is designed to complement modern bathrooms and has been created with accessibility in mind. It is easy to install, operate and maintain, and has level access, magnetic closures, rise and fall hinges and toughened glass. Another feature is the anti-bacterial properties to help protect against infections such as MRSA.

How much? Contact your local supplier for prices

Where? Easa, tel: 028 9261 2500, www.easagroup.com



ACTIVE WALKER

What? TGA launched its new Active Walker walking frame at this year's event. This lightweight piece of equipment aims to dispel traditional notions of walking frames with its modern design, easily adjustable handles and a kerb climber to make getting out and about even easier. There is a seat for rest periods, with four adjustable heights. The Walker can be folded for convenient storage.

How much? £179

Where? TGA, tel: 01787 882244, www.tga-electric.com



FLEXZI

What? The Flexzi is an innovative flexible system for positioning items such as channel changers, mirrors and iPods exactly where you need them, without the need for brackets and rods. It fits to a chair or table with no additional equipment required. Wires are run inside the tubing, making it safer and neater. Choose from a Velcro or clamp base. Available in three different lengths.

How much? From £70

Where? MERU, tel: 020 8770 8286, www.meru.org.uk

HAND WEIGHTS

What? Palm Bell hand weights are safe to use and easy to hold, making weight-training easier. The weights have Velcro easy-grip safety straps which help to secure them in your hands, making them ideal for people with limited dexterity. The straps can be adjusted to suit each individual user's needs. Available in five weight levels and different colours.



How much? £19.99 per pair, or £90 for full set (five pairs)

Where? Enjoyability, tel: 01935 815999, www.enjoyability.co.uk

CROCS SHOES

What? A new shoe in the popular Crocs range, initially developed in the US, has been launched by Healthy Shoes. The Silver Cloud, from the CrocsRX range of therapeutic shoes, incorporates silver particles to protect against bacteria. The shoes are designed to protect feet with impaired sensation and circulation, making them ideal for people with diabetes and skin conditions. The shoes also feature a protective toe cap and an elevated heel rim. Available in three colours and in sizes four to 12.

How much? £48

Where? Healthy Shoes, tel: 01458 449071, www.healthyshoes.co.uk



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Dame Tanni Grey Thompson's latest venture, following her retirement from Paralympic sport, is Tanni and Anni at Racketys, a new range of adaptive, stylish and easy-to-wear clothing for adults, including trenchcoats and waterproof clothing. The range is being produced, in collaboration with Annabel McMahon, for Racketys. The collection will be launching this summer. Tel: 01538 381430, www.tanniandanni.com

DINNERUP

What? DinnerUP was one of the winners of the daily new product award, a new award introduced at Naidex this year which picks a product on each day of the show. The device fixes to a kitchen unit or a wall and has a winding handle to lever pet bowls up and down, helping people with mobility problems to feed their pet without needing to bend down. Can be folded away when not in use.

How much? £69

Where? DinnerUP, tel: 0845 200 8509, www.dinnerup.co.uk

**GARDEN TOOLS**

What? Peta UK's range of Easi-grip garden hand tools featured in the Family House show house at Naidex this year. The range is designed for accessibility, with angled handles, soft-feel grips and bright colours. Long reach versions and add-on handles are available, and a recent addition to the arm support cuff is the soft-feel lining for extra comfort.

How much? Tools from £9.95 each, or £25 for set of three. Arm support cuff: £4.95

Where? Peta UK, tel: 01245 231118, www.peta-uk.com

CHILDREN**DREAM-RACER**

What? The Dream-Racer is a cap that allows disabled children to "drive" radio-controlled cars using their heads. The "smart" cap has four motion sensors that detect small head movements. The technology can also be used in gloves or shoes, and is being developed for Sony Playstations.

How much? There are currently three vehicles, which come with the cap. From £159.

Where? Dream-Racer, tel: 0870 711 7153, www.dream-racer.com

**DELTA BUGGY**

What? The Delta is a new three-wheel buggy for accessing all areas, from woods to beaches, in safety and comfort. The buggy is lightweight, with an all-terrain engineering system which provides manoeuvrability over rough terrain. The Delta also features an adjustable multi-position handle, and can be easily folded and fitted into a car boot. Aimed at children and young teenagers, with two sizes available, medium (for children up to 150cm in height) and large (up to 180cm).

How much? Medium: £800. Large: £850

Where? Delichon, tel: 01725 519405, www.delichon.co.uk

WIZZYBUG

What? The Wizzybug is a new electric mobility toy which enables children to make their way more easily around their house and garden. It has been developed by engineers at the Bath Institute for Medical Engineering (BIME) in collaboration with Whizz-Kidz. The bright and modern design features an adjustable seating system and a programmable joystick control. Additional accessories available.

For two to five-year-olds.

How much? £1,500-£2,000

Where? Whizz-Kidz, tel: 020 7233 6600, www.whizz-kidz.org.uk, BIME, tel: 01225 824103, www.bath.ac.uk/bime

**BEE**

What? The Bee is a colourful seating system which is adaptable and can be tailored to suit each child's needs, including different height options. New features include a hydraulic base with a foot pump mechanism. Additional accessories available.

For ages four months to four years.

How much? From £782 **Where?** Jenx, tel: 01142 853376, www.jenx.com



Sussex Health Care

Norfolk Lodge, Horsham, West Sussex
Redwood House, Broadbridge Heath, West Sussex



Sussex Health Care is an award winning group of care homes that were founded in 1985. Sussex Health Care now operate 15 care homes, predominantly in the West Sussex area, providing nearly 450 beds, incorporating specialist care provision as well as care for older people.

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Both Norfolk Lodge and Redwood House have been skilfully converted to accommodate 8 people in each home and offers a specialised residential environment for adults with learning disabilities who may also present with moderately challenging behaviour.

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For further information
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Head of Specialist Care Services and Future Development
Tel: (01403) 217338 Fax: 01403 210424
www.sussexhealthcare.org
Email: corrine.wallace@sussexhealthcare.org



Dear Rachel

• love and loneliness • personal problems • advice and support

Rachel Wilson, who is disabled herself, has spent many years advising on disability matters. Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or email your problem to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



Under pressure

I have just been refused disability living allowance (DLA) because I have been told I do not qualify for help getting around.

I had an accident about a year ago and dislocated and fractured my ankle, leaving me having to use a walking stick and in severe pain all the time. I am my husband's carer as he is registered disabled with severe back problems.

I received a phone call asking me questions about my health problems before a decision was made. The woman in question asked me about the time, speed, and manner of walking. I was unable to give an answer to her questions until she asked about shopping at a supermarket. I told her again that I could not give her a time. She suggested 10 minutes. I felt pressured into agreeing with her.

I am in the process of appealing against their decision and would value your opinion on this matter.

Sharron, by email

It is difficult to comment on your case specifically, especially while you are appealing, but I am concerned that you felt pressurised on the phone. The nature of the application process for DLA means that people often want precise answers to questions, which are not always easy to give.

You say that you are appealing and I am not sure whether anyone is helping you in that, but it might be useful, if you have not done so already, to think about contacting an organisation which can support you in answering questions. It might help you feel less pressurised. They are not there to answer for you, but to support you in answering for yourself.

There are two organisations that may be able to help. The first is Disability Alliance and they can be contacted on 020 7247 8759. Although their helpline is for members only, they publish advice on appealing against tribunal decisions on benefits and may be able to give you further information.

You might also like to contact your local DIAL (Disability Information and Advice Line) office, who can also give you free advice. If you contact them on 01302 310 123 they can put you in touch with your nearest office. They have also recently updated their website with new information and links.

• See www.dialuk.info

Need more support

I am disabled and need extra financial support, be that transport from Dukinfield to Bury every weekend for access to my son, or extra income.

I am already receiving DLA and incapacity benefit (IB) and cannot drive due to my disability.

Please have you any advice or relevant information?

Katy, by email

While you are receiving IB, there is a limit to how much income you can earn without affecting your benefit entitlement.

It is not clear from your

Defining disabilities

Could you tell me whether incontinence is included as a disability?
Jim, by email

Under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), incontinence is included in the list of day-to-day activities which can be classified as disabling. Whether or not it can be considered a disability for any given individual will depend on how much it affects the life of the individual concerned. The DDA states that for anything to be considered a disability, the effect of it must be "long-term", meaning lasting or expected to last more than 12 months, "substantial" and "adverse".

So, for example, occasional bladder weakness is less likely to be classified as a disability than incontinence, which requires you to take account of it in your lifestyle, or take medication.

A full list of the factors included under the DDA can be found on the Disability Rights Commission website.

• See www.drc-gb.org

email whether you currently receive any personal support or assistance, or the nature of your impairment, but it may be worth you contacting your social services department to see whether you would be eligible for direct payments to help in meeting your transport needs.

Direct payments can be made to disabled people who have been assessed as being in need of support. As the name suggests, they are made directly to the person concerned to enable them to source their own support. I would suggest that you contact your local social services department and ask to speak to the person who deals with direct payments.

He thinks I'm 'silly'

I am 21 years old and I have learning disabilities. There is a boy I like at college but I think he doesn't like me because of my disability. He is not disabled and treats me like a silly child and not a grown adult who is older than him. He is 19.

I really like this boy, but my mum and sister want me to have a boyfriend who has a disability like me. My mum, my sister and my friends, except my friend Kate, think I am being silly. I have never had a boyfriend and sometimes feel sad when my younger sister goes out with her boyfriend and I am left on my own.

What can I do to get this boy to stop thinking I am silly and bad because I am disabled and to like me?

Name withheld

You are certainly not silly and neither is you wanting to have a boyfriend. I am sorry that things at college with this boy are making you sad, and if he thinks you are silly and bad because you are disabled, then he is being very silly himself.

You are right to remember

that you are a grown adult and this boy is obviously not as sensible as you. I know how much it can hurt when you like someone and they don't feel the same, but if he thinks it is OK to treat you badly, perhaps he wouldn't be a nice boyfriend?

It sounds as if your friend Kate understands. Talk to her about how you are feeling and try to make as many friends as you can. You may get to know another boy you really like and who likes you and is kind to you, not horrible.

It might help to talk to other people with learning difficulties who understand how you are feeling. People First is a group of people with learning difficulties who help each other to make decisions for themselves. The address and telephone number is below and they also have other local groups.

• Northamptonshire People First, PO Box 5200, Northampton, NN1 1ZB, tel: 01604 721 666



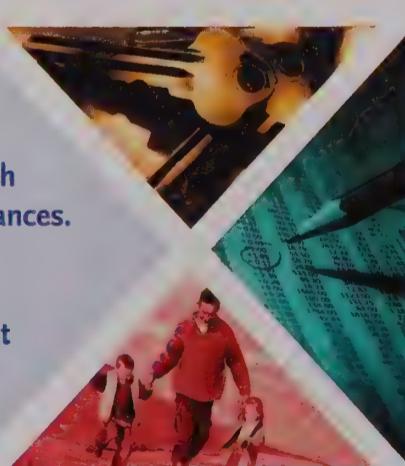
Help at the end of the phone

DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick gives disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psycho-therapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, with a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882 111.

Do you have concerns about medical treatment received by you or a family member?

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ASK THE READERS

"Does anyone have any advice for a disabled person who has been badly treated by staff in a shop or supermarket?"

'I was petrified'

Ask to see the manager and put a complaint in. If you are still not happy, then go further and see your MP, or social worker, as they know what to do.

I was badly treated when a man who worked in a shop tried to kiss and touch me. I was petrified and upset.

It took me weeks to tell someone and then a social worker got involved and asked me if I wanted to take him to court. I didn't because I was too upset and frightened. But I never went back in that shop again. Don't let anyone get away with it as that person could do it to other vulnerable people who are too scared to react.

Erica

Relatively lucky

I think you are relatively lucky. Britain is well ahead of my country, Turkey, in its treatment of disabled people. In Turkey many more people are rude to disabled people than in Britain.

Nurcem

Write to the manager

I wouldn't let the matter drop until I had registered a concern with the store manager. Letters do get to the manager and the managers do reply – they have to. You are a customer first and foremost and the check-out guy needs a quick lesson in customer care.

Do write to the manager in a calm, firm manner to say how embarrassed and hurt you were. Give it a week and then go shopping again and try to get the same guy – see if his approach has changed – I bet you'll find it has! It's important to draw the store's attention to incidents like this because how else will they learn?

Jill

NEXT MONTH'S QUESTION:

"Does anyone have any experiences of how other countries treat disabled people in comparison with the UK?" Send your answers and your own questions to "Ask The Readers" at *Disability Now* at the usual address or email: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



SIMON SAYS

Attracting attention goes with the territory for many disabled people, but it can also be an advantage

A glance, a look, across a crowded room and it was love at first sight. While not the most common way people meet, it does represent what many think of as the most romantic way to meet a partner. Of course, it relies on first impressions, and that means looks. If we are trying to put ourselves "out there" and meet new friends, partners and lovers, what can we do, as disabled people, to create that right first impression?

The great diversity of those who are attracted to one another never ceases to encourage me. While personality and compatibility are key in the long run, the way you present yourself shows how you feel about yourself, and how comfortable you are with your body and being yourself.

Disabled people can grow up having their lives controlled by others, as well as the clothes we wear, the places we go and the friends we meet. Unlike our non-disabled peers who can

sneak away and get up to mischief. However, as we get more independence, we can start to discover ourselves, take risks, and learn from our mistakes.

The truth is, standing out in a crowd comes with the territory. The wheelchair, crutches, strange walk or disfigurement all attract a glance. It is easy to see it as

'When that glance comes don't avoid it, but accept their curiosity and use it'

curiosity rather than real interest. And let's face it, that is almost always part of the reason people look at us.

However, at least we are not invisible! We can never become clones of Beyoncé or Justin Timberlake and so we are free from having to try.

Many non-disabled peers spend so much energy, time and money trying to achieve the media image of desirability. But we can use our difference to be

different, to be ourselves. This can be an attractive and refreshing experience.

Pretending, acting, trying to live up to an image is tiring and doomed to fail. Download the excellent *Changing Faces* new *Guide to Intimacy** for ideas and tips. So start by looking at what you wear. Does it make the most of who you feel you really are? If you use a wheelchair, is it something that looks good? Are you proud of it? Does it project who you are, rather than that corporate NHS look? Customise, but not in that sticker/slogan way that makes you look like a well-travelled suitcase.

Finally, think about how interesting you are. When that glance comes, don't avoid it, but accept their curiosity and then use that to draw them into you. They may or may not be your type or you theirs but a little flirting never did any harm. In fact it's fun and great for your self-esteem.

*www.changingfaces.org.uk

Send your relationship questions to "Simon Says" at the usual postal address or email: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

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Parking debate is highly charged

Free parking for blue badge holders could become a thing of the past if payment schemes in the south of England catch on. By Helen Smith and Ivy Broadhead

In a country where public transport is still largely inaccessible, one thing disabled people have traditionally been able to depend on is free parking in public car parks. But this may be about to change.

Some councils in the south of England are now extending parking charges to cover blue badge holders, despite concern from disabled people.

'If this becomes the norm it will be difficult for disabled people'

From April, South Somerset District Council (SSDC) introduced charging for blue badge holders in selected car parks. Where car parks provide low parking meters, wide bays, and good lighting and signage, disabled people now pay the same charges as non-disabled people. There is also an unofficial half-hour concession to take into account the extra time it may take for a disabled person to transfer into and out of a vehicle or to load mobility equipment, and parking remains free for disabled people in less accessible car parks.

Before introducing the new charging policy, SSDC spent two years in consultation with South Somerset Disability Forum (SSDF), which says it supports the charges on the basis of "inclusion".

Frances Peacey, SSDF co-ordinator, says: "We took the view that disabled people should contribute to the car parks, if they are DDA compliant. The forum's view was that to be inclusive, it is both positive and negative.

"On-street car parking is still free, and we have managed to increase the blue badge spaces to six per cent of the total, and the proportion is greater in centrally placed car parks."

But reactions from disabled people so far have been overwhelmingly negative. "We have had quite a lot of complaints," says Mrs Peacey.

And she accepts that, in a rural area like south Somerset, many disabled people rely on a car for transportation and independence. "Public transport is poor. The car is important," she says.

Mrs Peacey also agrees that for some disabled people, the charges could pose a problem.



"But we've insisted on extra street parking for disabled people, and we would fight to keep that free," she adds.

SSDC's principal engineer, Garry Green, says disabled people are still eligible for a discount of up to 50 per cent on

any parking charges by buying disabled drivers' parking vouchers from council offices, which he says "minimises the inconvenience to all disabled users of our car parks where there is charging".

But south Somerset is not

alone. In April last year, Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) District Council introduced similar measures.

A council spokesman says it began charging disabled people to park in two accessible car parks after consulting with West of England Centre for Inclusive Living (WECIL), which he says raised no objections. And he says the council has received no complaints.

But Cathie Baker, a development worker for Bath and North East Somerset Disability Equality Forum, which is run by WECIL, says it was unable to respond to the consultation because of changes within the forum at the time.

She says the charges do not seem to have caused a major problem for members because the car parks involved were not the most vital ones, but the council needs to provide extra on-street parking for disabled people to make up for the charges.

And she says they would oppose extending the charges to other car parks. "Our members have concerns that if this becomes the norm, it is going to be difficult for disabled people, particularly in an area such as Bath, which is quite rural."

Havant Borough Council in Hampshire has also announced a proposal to begin charging blue badge holders to park in seafront car parks on Hayling Island, on the grounds that it is a "leisure" parking facility.

'Until disabled people have the same public transport choices it's not fair to charge blue badge holders'

The council has yet to consult directly with any local disability groups on the issue, although plans will be published this month for residents to express their views. The council said it had no plans to charge blue badge holders in any other council car parks.

Douglas Campbell, chairman of the disabled drivers' charity Mobilise, says: "There are a growing number of disabled people who feel that if blue badge holders were charged to park there would be less abuse of the parking bays, but I feel that until disabled people have the same choices with regards to public transport it is not fair that blue badge holders are charged."

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Music



Andy Coleman

Most of us dream of making it in the music industry, singing on stage to adoring crowds and touring the world performing at sell-out venues. Well for singer-songwriter Andy Coleman that dream is slowly becoming a reality.

Andy, 21, is partially sighted. "I have tried not to worry about my sight problems too much as otherwise it would have held me back," he says. "I have had some discrimination but that has made me more determined to carry on."

Andy, from Liverpool, began singing at school when a friend told him he had a good voice, and has been performing from a young age. At the age of 11, he joined a children's roadshow that trained and entertained for fun.

"We put on shows for local charities and events. As I got older I entered talent contests both locally and on TV and had many successes." He appeared on ITV's *Talent of Tomorrow*, Michael Barrymore's *My Kind of*



Music and BBC1's *The Next Best Thing*, and has been featured on Radio 4's *In Touch* programme. He also got through the early stages of ITV's *Popstars: The Rivals* in 2002.

In 2004 he performed at the UNHCR concert for Darfur at the Royal Albert Hall in London, and played grand piano accompanied by the Royal Philharmonic concert orchestra. "To actually play my own songs and appear on stage with the likes of Chrissie Hynde, Mario

Frangoulis, Mick Hucknall and Sir Willard White was a dream come true," says Andy.

Influenced by the likes of David Gray, Coldplay and George Michael, he is building quite a fan base. However, it has not been easy. The record industry is notoriously tough to break into and he has had his fair share of knocks.

"I have had quite a few auditions with record labels and have always received good feedback but so far no offers of a contract," he says.



"I think nowadays record labels are not prepared to take risks.

"They would rather have everything in place before they sign, such as a manager, a fan base and a finished album... Artists need to [develop] themselves and this is what I am working on at the moment, such as gigging and promoting through my own website and the MySpace website."

Andy studies at the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts (LIPA), and

has formed his own band, which performs in and around Liverpool. Andy's latest album is *Wake Up To My World*, and is available from his website, where you can also listen to the songs.

• See www.andrewcolemanmusic.com. Andy's MySpace page is www.myspace.com/andycoleman.

Andy will be performing at the Folk on the Coast festival in Wirral on 10 June. Tel: 0151 678 9902, or go to www.wirralfolkonthecoast.com

Christine Toner

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For further information tel: 020 7696 6925
email: willsandtrusts@mencap.org.uk
visit: www.mencap.org.uk/willsandtrusts



What's on

Theatre

Hijinx theatre, which includes performers with learning difficulties, is touring to 14 July with *Ruling the Roost*. The play, which includes music and puppetry, is set in the Mediterranean, and focuses on families and relationships.

• Tel: 02920 300331, www.hijinx.org.uk

Events

The Boundless Festival continues throughout June in Southwark. The borough-wide festival highlights disability arts, culture and sport. There are films, guided tours, theatre, exhibitions, art workshops and performances, including Mat Fraser and Caroline Parker.

• Tel: 020 7525 1006, www.southwark.gov.uk/boundless

Art Shape is holding a conference, *Space Between*, on 1 June in Bristol. The training day is aimed at inclusive arts practices, and will feature workshops, presentations, discussion groups and performances, including Laurence Clark and The Fingersmiths. From £5.

• Tel: 01452 307684, www.artshape.co.uk

Music

The Squidz Club, part of *Heart 'n' Soul*, which is run by and for people with learning difficulties, is at the Albany in Deptford on 8 June. Funk-punk trio The Fish Police are headline act at the summer club night. £3.

• Tel: 020 8694 1632, www.heartsoul.co.uk

Dance

Inclusive dance theatre company Amici will be performing their latest show, *Elegy*, at the Lyric theatre in Hammersmith from 7-9 June. It fuses music, dance and text, to tell stories of mothers whose children have died. BSL-interpreted performances on 8 June.

• Tel: 020 8964 5060, www.amicidance.org

Blue Eyed Soul is touring with *Don't Push Me*, a triple bill of dance and aerial performances.

• For dates and venues, tel: 01743 210830, www.blueeyedsouldance.com

For more What's on: www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Film



Goya's Ghosts

Goya's Ghosts is a part-historical, part-fictional account of the life and work of Spanish painter Francisco Goya (Stellan Skarsgård, *see picture below*). Set in 18th century Spain during the Spanish Inquisition, the film cleverly juxtaposes the two sides of Goya's successful career, with artworks comprising, on the one hand, stylised formal paintings of aristocratic figures, and on the other, the paintings he is most well-known for today, the graphic and realistic portrayals of the horrors of conflict, with people being raped and killed, screams etched on their faces and their bodies contorting in agony.

The film follows Goya's beautiful muse and model Inés (Natalie Portman), a member of a wealthy local family.



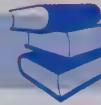
Goya and his artistic circle are investigated by the Inquisition, and Inés is tortured and jailed for being Jewish. She is raped by Brother Lorenzo, an official of the Inquisition (a suitably chilling Javier Bardem), and gives birth to a baby girl who is taken from her.

Throughout Inés' ordeal, Goya attempts to use his connections to set her free, and after her release years later, makes it his mission to unite mother and daughter Alicia (also played by Natalie Portman). Meanwhile, he is slowly losing his hearing, and as he becomes deaf he communicates through an interpreter (Wael Al Moubayed), who is depicted as a cartoon-like buffoon. Close-ups of speakers' lips further parody Goya's deafness and his desire to communicate.

Goya's Ghosts packs a powerful punch. The acting is flawless (especially from the ever-reliable Portman), the period detail is meticulous, the cinematography is beautiful and the depiction of the simultaneous beauty and horror of this period in history, and of Goya's art, is cleverly portrayed. However, despite all this, there is something lacking, and the ambiguous ending leaves you wanting a more satisfying conclusion, more of a reward for sitting through such a complex, harrowing and emotional film.

Lucy Howard

Audiobooks



Summer is when we turn our thoughts to holidays, so which new audiobook should you pack along with the CD player?

New titles from Penny Vincenzi, including *Windfall* and *An Absolute Scandal* (Headline, £17.99), superbly read by Laura Bratton, would make very entertaining holiday listening, as would the latest from Nicci French, *Losing You* (Penguin, £12.99), read by Saskia Reeves.

However, among many new releases, *Winter in Madrid*, the latest novel by C J Sansom (Macmillan, £16.99), stands out, not least because of Simon Russell Beale's brilliant narration.

This part-thriller, part-love story is set in the Spanish capital shortly after the country's bloody Civil War while General Franco weighs up whether or not to abandon Spain's neutrality as Hitler's forces march through Europe.

Three of the central characters all knew each other at public school in Britain – one is a former Dunkirk veteran who has reluctantly joined the British Secret Service, and finds

himself on a dangerous mission to gain the confidence of his former school contemporary, now a dodgy Madrid businessman.

The businessman's girlfriend, a former Red Cross nurse, is tied up in an equally fraught undercover mission of her own, trying to track down her former lover, the third of the schoolboy trio, who became a passionate Communist and has disappeared on the battlefields of Jeroma.

Having been enthralled by historian Sansom's *Sovereign*, I expected great things from *Winter in Madrid* and I was not disappointed. Both author and narrator grabbed my attention and the six hours raced by. It is one of the most compelling audiobooks I have heard for some time.

Vidar Hjardeng

C. J. SANSON

WINTER

IN

MADRID



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BEYOND BOUNDARIES LIVE

Beyond Boundaries will be at Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey, on 29-30 June. It is a new show offering disabled visitors the opportunity to find out about products and services and get involved in a range of activities. Learn basketball with members of the GB wheelchair basketball team, try wheelchair rock-climbing or learn angling with British Disabled Angling in the interactive sports demonstration area. There will be cars, handcycles and motorbikes available for test drives. There will also be seminars, and participants include Paralympian Ade Adepitan. Free. Tel: 020 8614 0833, www.beyondboundarieslive.co.uk

Events

What Disability?, an exhibition offering guidance on equipment, will be held in Exeter on 5-6 June. Tel: 01789 840999, www.whatdisability-southwest.co.uk

There will be a children's day at **London Zoo** on 16 June for disabled children and their families. There will be two new exhibits, Gorilla Kingdom and the Rainforest Lookout, and a flying bird display. BSL interpretation will be provided for all talks and displays. Reduced rates available from £6.50. Carers free. 10-5.30pm. Tel: 020 7449 6551, www.zsl.org

Websites

Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL) has launched an online housing register for disabled people. See www.gcil.org.uk

Carers

The National Extension College and the **Princess Royal Trust for Carers** run the Carers into Education project, which offers reduced fees on distance learning courses to carers over the age of 16 living in the Eastern and Midlands regions. Courses include GCSEs and vocational subjects. Tel: 01223 400 387, email: sue.crowley@nec.ac.uk

Services

Disabled people claiming disability-related benefits may be eligible for free home insulation through a partnership between **British Gas** and **Scope**. The offer is part of the Here to HELP project, and offers free loft and cavity wall insulation. Applicants may also opt for a free benefits health check. Tel: 0845 605 2535, quoting reference number HTHSCOPEPR

The Home Heat Helpline and **Leonard Cheshire** have launched a new drive to encourage people to call the helpline for advice on their energy bills and their energy supplier, and to find out how they can access vital advice and services through the energy industry's priority service register. Tel: 0800 33 66 99.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has launched Helpline, an online messaging service aimed at people who have difficulties using telephones. The service allows the user to have a live conversation with a DRC helpline adviser without the need for emailing or textphones. See www.drc-gb.org/helpline

Carlisle ME/CFS Support Group is a new group helping people in the Cumbria area with ME and CFS (chronic fatigue syndrome). It will also develop research projects into the conditions. Tel: 01772 895 265, email: lm.danielis@uclan.ac.uk

The Disabled Living Foundation (DLF) has a new and improved helpline, which now has a voicemail system. The helpline offers advice on equipment. Tel: 0845 130 9177, textphone: 020 7432 8009, email: advice@dlf.org.uk

Appointments

Neil Betteridge, chief executive of Arthritis Care, has been appointed the first Patient and Public Champion, to monitor NHS efforts to reach the government's target of reducing waiting times to 18 weeks by December 2008.

STAMPS

We no longer collect stamps at *DN*. Please send your stamps to the **RNIB**, PO Box 6198, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 9XT. For every £1 raised, 84p goes directly towards helping people with visual impairments.

Publications

Scope has launched *Imagine the Difference*, an educational resource written by and for teachers, produced as part of its Time to Get Equal campaign. It uses a series of activities – often based on real-life examples – to help children develop their understanding of diversity, including disability. Aimed at 5-11-year-olds. Free. Tel: 0870 242 5572, www.scope.org.uk/imaginethedifference

Thrive, the national gardening charity for disabled people, has published a new leaflet, *Tips for Easier Gardening*, which gives practical instructions and advice on making gardening more accessible. Free. Tel: 0118 988 5888, www.thrive.org.uk

Commission into Careers

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) has launched a commission examining the recruitment, training, deployment and career progression of disabled staff in lifelong learning in England and Wales. To contribute, visit www.niace.org.uk/projects/commissionfordisabledstaff

The Disability Martial Arts Association

The Disability Martial Arts Association is inviting disabled people who are interested in martial arts to get involved. Tel: 02030 117819, www.disabilitymartialartsassociation.co.uk

In last month's *DN*, we mentioned Gojo, a new website aimed at making travelling by public transport easier for young disabled people, launched as part of a Disability Rights Commission campaign. The website address given was wrong. The correct address is: www.mygojo.co.uk

FOR SALE

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Renault Kangoo with 3 or 4 seats (including driver), auto. Tel: 020 8444 7572 (E. Finchley).

VW VOLKSWAGEN 2004 Sharan SE TDI PD, 130 bhp Manual, 1.9 Brotherwood raised roof conversion. Rear access for wheelchair, tinted windows, satin Silver, FSH, MOT 04/08. 23,250 miles. Any trial. Tel: 01902-330639 (Wolverhampton).

GOWRINGS SWIVEL SEAT, 180 degree projection, extends out of car for wheelchair transfer. Suits most cars, cost £1,100 2 years ago, asking £400 ono. Tel: 01752 881124 (Plymouth) or mobile: 07968 088347.

RENAULT KANGOO VENTURE 1.5, diesel, 84 bhp, metallic blue, 56 plate, 3k miles, 3 seats, air con, abs, air bags, radio CD player, e/windows, tinted windows, central locking. Complete with ramp and winch. Cost over £16,000, asking £9,950 for quick sale. Tel: 01482 801951 (Hull).

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VW SHARAN 2.0, green, P reg (1996), 83k miles. With Automotive conversion. Vgc, only one owner from new, fsh, MOT Oct 07. £2,990 ono. Tel: 07796 942035 (Herts) or email: ivan@varecka.co.uk

FORD FOCUS ZETEC 1.6, auto, dark green, registered 2001 (51 reg). With Constables Carchair conversion providing upfront passenger position incl powered wheelchair. Fsh, £6,800. Tel: 01277 821692 (Brentwood) or email: edwinfisher@hotmail.com

PEUGEOT 806 2.0, auto, with Constables front seat Carchair conversion. 2002/52, 19k miles, silver, air con, 9 months' tax and MOT. Very light use, in good condition, £10,950 ono. Tel day: 020 7896 01442 865470 (Herts).

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MERCEDES VITO 2.0 5-door van, 52 reg, blue, coded stereo, pas, abs. With GM Coachwork wheelchair conversion incl pneumatic foldaway lift and chair. Can carry up to 3 wheelchairs and 4 passengers. Only 2 owners from new, in excellent condition and only 24k miles, £9,500 ono. Tel: 01752 770859 (Plymouth) or mobile: 07933 676400

RENAULT KANGOO 1.2 Expression, Constables conversion lowered floor, wheelchair access ramp and inertia reel belts. Seats 3 plus wheelchair. First registered Jan 04, MOT April 08, FSH, 23k miles. PAS, electric windows and mirrors, CD/radio. New exhaust system, front discs and pads. £7,250 ono. Tel: 01243 828588 (Bognor Regis) or e-mail: rsalmon@dsl.pipex.com

VW CARAVELLE 2001 2.5 TDI SWB Manual. Registered May 2001. Wheelchair accessible, rear entry with lowering suspension. Twin side doors. Electronic Winch for wheelchair. 4-point webbing for wheelchair clamps. Front rotating seat for wheelchair transfer. Seats 7 people without wheelchair. 3 removable seats, £7,000 fixed. Air conditioning front and rear. MOT for 1 year. Tel: Maggie (01479) 810004 (Grantown-on-Spey, Moray).

Cont'd see pg 51

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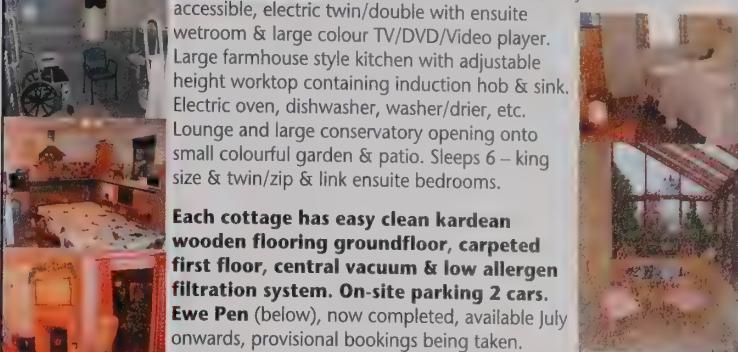
The Grande Maison sleeps up to 10, the Petite Maison up to 5. Contact Ed Passant on 01233 731097 or ed@acessholidays.com www.acessholidays.com

• Holidays (cont'd pg 48)



Barn Cottage – left in picture. Level access, groundfloor zip & link twin /double room with ensuite shower (not wetroom) – we hope to include colour contrasts for partially sighted when we redecorate in spring – large colourful garden. Sleeps 6 – four-poster & double bed. Suitable for elderly & those with restricted mobility.

Rick Cottage – right in picture with conservatory. Level access, fully wheelchair



accessible, electric twin/double with ensuite wetroom & large colour TV/DVD/Video player. Large farmhouse style kitchen with adjustable height worktop containing induction hob & sink. Electric oven, dishwasher, washer/drier, etc. Lounge and large conservatory opening onto small colourful garden & patio. Sleeps 6 – king size & twin/zip & link ensuite bedrooms.

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Totally level throughout. For more information call Debbie Wells on 01277 354313

Cornwall – Nr Truro.

2 newly converted barns on small family farm. Fully wheelchair accessible. Ensuite bedrooms. Sleeps up to 6. For details contact Esme Eyles 01726 883240 or www.treworgansfarm.co.uk

An idyllic & peaceful cumbria beauty spot. The Tranquill Otter. Lux lodges with sauna & whirlpool bath/hot-tub, logburner. All lakeside position with picture book views. Outstanding w/c accessible lodges, paths, shops etc. Wheely Boat! 01228 576661. www.thetranquillotter.co.uk

• Recruitment (on page 46 to 51)

Leonard Cheshire is the UK's leading provider of disability support services, and campaigns for the rights of disabled people.

Service User Support

National SUNA Committee Development Worker

£27,500 p.a. (under review) Full Time

A disabled person is required to assist Leonard Cheshire service users lead their national committee to become an independent organisation. The SUNA national committee is elected by other service users to create effective change within Leonard Cheshire and beyond. The post holder will facilitate national meetings, design training and link externally and with existing regional SUS field-staff. You will work from home but be within reasonable travelling distance of the SUS office in Wiltshire in order to attend weekly meetings. National travel including overnight stays for SUNA and staff meetings will also be required. A commitment to the Social Model of Disability and experience of facilitating groups of disabled people is essential.

For an application pack please contact The Administrator, Leonard Cheshire SUS, St George's, Semington, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 6JQ. T: 01380 870777. F: 01380 871337. E: kathy.iles@lc-uk.org

Different formats available on request.

Closing date: 12 June 2007.

Interviews will be held in Semington on 25 June 2007.

www.leonard-cheshire.org

We welcome applications from disabled people. All vacancies are subject to standard or enhanced disclosure.

Charity Number: 218186



Creating opportunities with disabled people
LEONARD CHESHIRE

ONE WORLD ACTION

FOR A JUST AND EQUAL WORLD

Fundraiser

We need someone special to run our essential private fundraising activities. Someone with the skills, confidence and personality to ask for money – and who is committed to our campaign for a just and equal world, to women's full participation, to supporting our partners in the South who seek to claim their rights and make their voices heard.

If we are describing you, we want to hear from you.

This is a full-time post on a salary of £28,340.

We particularly welcome applications from disabled people.

Download an application pack at:

<http://www.oneworldaction.org/about/index.jsp?ref=14>

Closing date: 12.00 noon, Monday 4 June 2007

Interviews: Thursday 7 June 2007

Charity No. 1022298

OWA is an equal opportunities employer and aims to ensure a workplace where people are treated with dignity and respect.

One World Action, Bradley's Close, White Lion Street, London N1 9PF

www.oneworldaction.org

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A policy which is part of our heritage.

As one of the largest employers in Liverpool, we believe in being fair and inclusive to all.

For full details of our vacancies visit: www.liv.ac.uk/university/jobs.html
email: jobs@liv.ac.uk or call 0151 794 2210 (24 hour answer phone)



• Doctoral Studies

+3 ESRC Collaborative (CASE) Studentship with Leonard Cheshire and the University of Brighton

A +3 CASE studentship has been awarded for doctoral study to the Health and Social Policy Research Centre at the University of Brighton, in collaboration with Leonard Cheshire, to commence in October 2007. The purpose of the studentship is to explore, through case studies, the main barriers that disabled people have to confront when moving from residential care to Independent Living in the community. Applications are invited from candidates who satisfy the ESRC academic and residential eligibility requirements. Preference will be given to disabled researchers. Further information may be obtained from the ESRC website (www.esrc.ac.uk/esrccontent/postgradfunding/foindex.asp) or from Clare Evans at Leonard Cheshire (clare.evans@lc-uk.org) or Sue Balloch at the University of Brighton (S.Balloch@bton.ac.uk).

Please send a letter of application and CV to Sue Balloch, Director, Health and Social Policy Research Centre, University of Brighton, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9PH.

Closing date for applications, Friday 22nd June.

DEADLINE

Disability Now July 2007 published 23 June.
Classified deadlines: Booking: 8 June. Copy: 12 June.

DN Extra June 2007 published 9 June.
Classified deadlines: Booking and Copy: 30 May.

• Recruitment (on page 46 to 51)

To apply online visit www.shropshire.gov.uk/jobs

 Shropshire
County Council

Access Officer
£26,928 - £29,859 pa*
Shirehall Shrewsbury

You will be responsible for ensuring the provision of an accessible and convenient environment for disabled people using the County Council's services and properties. Your role will include undertaking access audits, providing advice on access design matters and to liaise with other public bodies within Shropshire, together with community, voluntary and Access Groups.

You will have relevant experience of undertaking access audits, advising on design matters and appraising schemes. You will have a minimum BTEC/HNC or equivalent in a construction related discipline, an Access Auditor qualification, and working knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, BS 8300 and Building Regulations. Ref: X07/032

For an informal discussion, please contact Peter Williams, Property Maintenance Manager on 01743 253406.

* Pay award pending
Closing date: Friday 15 June 2007.
For further details and an application pack contact: Shropshire Recruitment on Tel: 0845 6789004 (24 hour answerphone). E-mail: srt.requestjobpack@shropshire-cc.gov.uk quoting our job reference number. Details of posts are also available on our website: www.shropshire.gov.uk and we welcome applications submitted online. CVs are not acceptable.

Better for everyone.

There is no upper age limit for applicants. Committed to Equality in Service Delivery and Employment

The University of Kent frequently recruits for clerical assistants, technicians and IT assistants, administrative staff, research and lecturing staff across our faculties.

Staff who have a disability are currently under-represented and we wish to improve the diversity of our workforce. The University is a member of the double tick pledge and will interview all applicants who meet the essential criteria.

For information about our vacancies please check our recruitment website <http://www.kent.ac.uk/jobs/>

For details in different formats, please apply to The Personnel Department on 01227 827837 (24 hours). Textphone users please phone 01227 824145.

We actively promote equal opportunity in education and employment and welcome applicants from all sections of the community.

University of Kent



Kent has over 16,000 students at 4 locations, including our acclaimed new Medway Campus, a Postgraduate Centre in Brussels and the University of the Transmanche. With a capital programme of £100m and 79 new Professors appointed, we have a clear investment strategy for our future.

• Public appointment

 Office for Disability Issues
HM Government



- Are you a disabled person or do you have a long-term health condition?
- Are you passionate about inclusive and accessible communications?
- Do you have experience or expertise in communications or marketing?
- Do you want to help government communicators develop their skills and knowledge of disability issues?

Have you answered yes to all four questions? If so, would you be interested in joining the Images of Disability expert advisory group?

Images of Disability is an initiative designed to support government communicators promote positive attitudes towards disability through their work. The initiative is looking for a disabled person to join the expert advisory group which provides strategic input and direction to the initiative.

Advisory group members meet in London on a quarterly basis. Reasonable expenses will be paid.

For more information, or if you need this advert in an alternative format, contact Miriam Phillips by 29 June 2007:

Tel: 020 7712 2017

Email: miriam.phillips@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Textphone: 0207 712 2032

Fax: 020 7962 8096

Post: Miriam Phillips, Office for Disability Issues, 6th Floor, The Adelphi, 1-11 John Adam Street, London, WC2N 6HT

east THAMES

A brighter future

We provide 13,200 homes in east London and Essex. Yet we're much more than a housing association. We take the lead in all kinds of social regeneration projects, right at the hub of the community. Expect to pioneer exciting new initiatives with a well-managed organisation that's closely in touch with its people.

Various Positions
We currently have a wide range of job opportunities. Please visit us at www.east-thames.co.uk or call 020 8522 2000 for further details. We welcome applications from people with disabilities. We are an equal opportunities employer.

www.east-thames.co.uk



GRAEae THEATRE COMPANY

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Britain's foremost disabled-led theatre company seeks:

TRAINING AND LEARNING PROJECTS MANAGER
£24-26k, 1-year full-time fixed term contract
To lead and manage all performing arts training, learning and outreach projects for 2007-08.
This post is open only to disabled applicants.

BSL COMMUNICATOR & OFFICE SUPPORT
£25-28k, 1-year full-time fixed term contract
To deliver BSL interpreting and administrative support to members of Graeae core staff.
Application packs from jobs@graeae.org or 020 7700 2455, specifying if an accessible format is required.
Applications are welcome from all sections of the community.
Deadline for applications: 4pm on 29 June 07
www.graeae.org reg. charity no. 284589

• Courses

Centre for Disability Studies School of Sociology and Social Policy University of Leeds

New Diplomas and MAs in Disability Studies

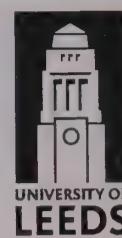
In addition to our established Diploma/MA in Disability Studies programmes, the Centre of Disability Studies now offers five new taught post graduate courses in Disability and related fields. These include Disability and Gender, Disability and Health, Disability and Race and Ethnicity, Disability and Social Policy, and Disability and Special Educational Needs. These dedicated schemes give students the opportunity to apply a disability studies perspective to particular areas of social policy and support. All our Disability Studies courses are designed for people working in or planning a career in the general area of disability research and related services.

Candidates will normally have a first degree or equivalent professional qualification, **but relevant experience will be taken into account where appropriate.** This course is taught in an accessible location and the University welcomes disabled students.

Note: only the Post Graduate Diploma/MA in Disability Studies scheme is available as an open distance learning package.

For further details please contact **MARIE ROSS** or **DEBBIE WESTMORELAND** in the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds, LST 9JT.

Tel: and Minicom 0113 343 4408 or 0113 343 4407



• Holidays (cont'd pg 50)

SPECIALIST RESPITE CARE BREAKS

For disabled people

Blackpool Holiday Centre

2nd – 8th June 2007 (Sat – Fri)

From £275 per person, full board.

Child prices (under 12) available on request

South Downs Holiday Village, Nr Chichester, Sussex

17th – 21st September 2007 (Mon – Fri)

From £195 per person full board (adults only)



Prices include three meals a day, VAT and cancellation/liability insurance. Entertainment every evening including music, competitions and cabaret.

Wide range of daytime activities inc. handcrafts and beauty care.

Visits to local places of interest. Trained and experienced helpers.

Medical and nursing advice if required. Further information and bookings

Call 020 8390 9752 and quote DNJ

Or write to Rosemary McIntyre MBE, Holidays with Help,
4 Pebblecombe, Adelaide Road, Surbiton, KT6 4LL.

Email: holidays.with.help@lineone.net Web: www.holidayswithhelp.org.uk



Hartswheel Barn and Stables are part of an old converted granary, within a working farm, with breathtaking views, just 5 miles from the Eden Project.

The Stables has double bedroom with ensuite shower, and twin room with electric bed, and ceiling hoist tracking to ensuite bathroom. Enjoy the accessible garden, and meet rare-breed cows and calves.

The Barn sleeps 6 in 3 bedrooms.

NAS Mobility Grade 1, 2, 3a, 3i, & Access EXCEPTIONAL
Tel: 01208 873419 email: hartswheel@connexions.co.uk
www.connexions.co.uk/hartswheel

GAER COTTAGES

5* Quality self-catering cottages for ALL the family with an emphasis on facilities for disabled visitors. To cat 1, 2 & 3. 6 of the 9 traditional Welsh stone cottages are single storey, easily accessible from the car park. Luxurious indoor heated swimming pool with hoist. Games room. Holiday care award winners. Visit us at www.selfcateringinwales.co.uk

OR TEL/FAX
01570 470275

DITTISHAM DARTMOUTH SOUTH DEVON



Share and enjoy our tranquil beautiful location. Browns farm lies in a small hamlet close to the river Dart, stunning South Hams beaches and the interesting historic towns of Totnes and Dartmouth. Two spacious well-equipped cottages sleeping 6-10 have grade 2 accessible disabled access. Good local knowledge to enhance your stay. Relax, unwind & have fun!

For more information, contact Carol or Laurie on 01803 712556 email carol@brownsfarmcottages.co.uk or visit www.brownsfarmcottages.co.uk

It's not the love that runs out ...



BREAK really lives up to its name - providing supported holidays and respite care for people with learning disabilities.

... just the stamina

Year-round specialist care supported holidays are provided for children and adults with a range of learning and physical disabilities, including those with high level needs and challenging behaviours.

Guests enjoy an all inclusive holiday with 24-hour special care and a range of outings and activities on the Norfolk coast.

* Now booking for 2008!

To find out more or for an application form, please call 01263 822161

www.break-charity.org

office@break-charity.org

Reg. Charity No. 286850

Hertfordshire

Petasfield Stables Holiday Cottages, plus, building now for 2007, two bedroom cottages. (Please contact Helen Clark for details on the new cottages.)



Stunning, wheelchair accessible converted stables, with beautiful views over the Hertfordshire countryside. Riding, carriage driving and stable management courses available. Sleeps four – six people. Wheel-in showers, shower chair provided. Electric sink and hob riser in one kitchen. Private wild flower and sensory garden. Historic Hertford town centre 1.5 miles. Easy reach of London, Cambridge and St Albans and major road links. For more information contact: Helen Clark: 01992 504201. helen@petasfieldcottages.co.uk

France
Le Bas Boulay

Set within the heart of the Normandy countryside, in an idyllic setting, are two beautifully renovated self-catering holiday apartments. (sleeping 6 and 8)



“...will recommend it to everyone...Accommodation fantastic. Absolutely no complaints..”

Oakdown House, E. Sussex.

Tel: 00 33 233 28 87 72



As well as general holiday lets, we offer specialist holidays with music for accompanied people with learning disabilities.

rosandgeoff@songbirdholidays.com
www.songbirdholidays.com
www.lebasboulay.com

PERSONAL ADS

For personal ads, submit about 25 words and send a cheque or postal order for £10 payable to **Disability Now** with your ad. This is to help cover our costs.

DN

disabilitynow



Special offer: Save £5
on a one year subscription and
get a free *DN* Mug (while stocks last)

LOOK OUT for the
24 page Motoring
Supplement in
July's issue of *DN*



Pay just £13 for 12 issues and
mid-month issue *DN Extra* (usual price £18)

0845 120 7001

You can now pay by **Direct Debit**

- news • campaigns
- features • information
- health • holidays • jobs
- sports • arts

Please return this form to Disability Now Subscriptions, FREEPOST RLZU-YJSG-ACBJ, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne ME9 8GU.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Tel No: _____

Email: _____

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £ _____ made payable to *Disability Now*

I authorise you to charge my Visa Mastercard Switch

Card No:

Issue No: (Switch only) _____ Valid from: / Expiry date: /

Signature: _____

Date: _____

DN0607



•Holidays



GROSMONT, MONMOUTHSHIRE

Superb 'home from home' self catering bungalow suitable for families with a disabled relative of any age. Located on Welsh/English border and equidistant from city of Hereford and market towns of Abergavenny, Monmouth and Ross on Wye. The Brecon Beacons national park and numerous attractions suitable for all ages and interest are close by. Magnificent views, inc. 12thC Castle and in a lovely conservation village with amenities. Totally equipped bungalow, farmhouse style kitchen, all facilities, large lounge diner and conservatory. One double, one twin and a single with electric bed, sleeping 5 adults with ease, linen provided. Roomy bathroom with step in bath/shower and powered seat. Standing in large, fully accessible, secure, well maintained grounds. Ample parking.

We are wheelchair accessible (incl. raised settee, recliner, electric hoist and many extras). Dog friendly.

From £300 p.w. In high season there is discount for reduced occupancy.

Phone Lynn or Tony on 01981 240859 or on LTM3castles@aol.com

www.homefield.me.uk



• Recruitment (on page 46 to 51)

Make your next role as important as ours.

DFID, the Department for International Development: leading the British government's fight against world poverty.

We offer opportunities in our headquarters in London and East Kilbride – but also in many developing countries, with staff based in DFID offices plus British Embassies and High Commissions around the world. We have roles for leaders; professionals; specialists; managers; graduates and administrators.

DFID is an equal opportunities employer and selection is on merit. Applications are welcomed from all parts of the community and we actively encourage interest from women, ethnic minority groups and those with a disability. We will make any reasonable adjustments should they be required. Candidates should be UK Nationals, nationals of a member state of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth citizens with the right to work in the UK.

You can find out more about us, and our work, on our website www.dfid.gov.uk. You'll also find information about specific vacancies, opportunities, and an electronic application on the site.



www.dfid.gov.uk

Welcome to Langthwaite Farm Cottages

Luxuriously appointed 15th cent. farmstead cottage conversions in quiet countryside, one mile from a wealth of good food, leisure, shopping and worship in Historic Lancaster. Overlooking peaceful Quernmore Valley. Near to The Lake District, Forest of Bowland, Blackpool and Yorkshire Dales.



Very generously equipped throughout. Magnificent veranda views. Very disability friendly. Heaps of parking & play space. Highly Commended Awards. Outstanding Customer Service. Self-catering Holiday of the Year.

Langthwaite Farm, Langthwaite Road, Lancaster, LA2 9EB. Donald and Joan Deering, tel: 01524 62388; fax: 01524 34143; email: info@langthwaitefarmcottages.co.uk

web: www.langthwaitefarmcottages.co.uk

- 4 star • Disability grading M3 in both cottages • Each cottage sleeps 6 + infants, cot
- Self catering £285-495 • Open all year • Short breaks off peak • Families and all welcome
- Pets welcome • No smoking • 5 van caravan site

Holidays Enabled

For all enquiries please contact Max on:

Tel: 07966 927027

or email:

holidays-enabled@hotmail.co.uk

Qualified and experienced carers available to accompany disabled people on holiday, in the UK or overseas.

Near Salisbury – newly converted stable block self-catering units. Ground floor 1 double/twin bedroom en-suite wheel-in shower. Upstairs 1 double, 1 single, shower room. Open plan kitchen & living room. Patio & shared garden. ETB category 2, 4-star highly commended. Non-smoking. Prices from £195 pw. Available all year. Tel: 01722 349002, e-mail: mail@old-stables.co.uk, www.old-stables.co.uk

Homeleigh Country Cottages

Very close to all beaches.

Sea – Sun – Sand.

Pembrokeshire.

Tel: 01834 831765.

E-mail: enquiries@homeleigh.org

Web: www.homeleigh.org

Wheelchair access guaranteed.

Disabled aids available.



Access Category 1. Friendly welcome awaits.

Brochure available. WTB 4 Stars.

Las Piedras

Is a rural guesthouse in Spain providing fantastic holidays for disabled people, their families & friends.

Accessible. No stress—Totally wheelchair friendly. Roll-in showers. Accessible Transfers & Excursions. Mobility Aids & Care Available.

Friendly. Family Run. Relaxed Atmosphere. Family Rooms. Discounts for Children.

Luxurious. Beautiful, spacious, en-suite rooms with air-conditioning. Swimming pool. Excellent Food.

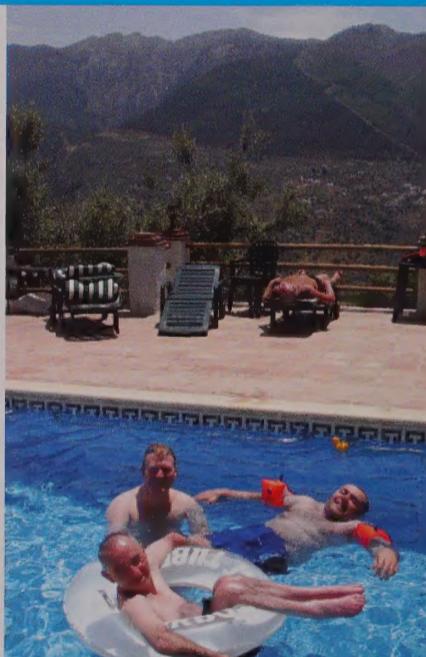
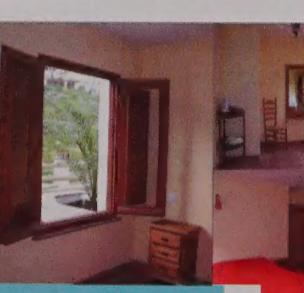
Beautiful. Breathtaking views of countryside & mountain. Gardens & Terraces.

Flexible. Holiday Packages to suit your needs; Full Board with excursions, B&B or Self Catering.



www.laspiedras.co.uk

Hannah & Adrian Stone, Las Piedras,



Also available accessible apartment on coast.

Contact us now for a brochure or further info.

Tel/Fax 00 34 952 033100

info@laspiedras.co.uk

Pilarejo B5, Alcaucín, Málaga, 29713, Spain

CONDITIONS

Disability Now maintains the right to amend or withdraw lineage adverts without prior notice. All adverts must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice.

Telephone numbers and addresses will not be placed in personal adverts, for confidentiality. Instead, Box numbers will be provided. Likewise, telephone numbers and addresses will not be given out over the telephone if requested.

Box Numbers can be requested for non-personal adverts. However, it may limit the response to it. If you want to advertise documents, goods or services contact Patrick Durham-Matthews tel: 020 7619 7320, fax: 020 7619 7331.

Lineage adverts can only be used by private individuals. All commercial enquiries must be addressed to Patrick Durham-Matthews (see contact details above).

DN cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage of adverts or letters during forwarding. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to check the content of their advert, and to ensure any abbreviations cannot be misunderstood.

DN next month

All the best news, views and jobs. Available 26 June

STEERING CLASS: Our annual motoring supplement, with 24 pages of features, test-drives, equipment, and your questions answered by a panel of experts

OUT OF AFRICA: Life for disabled people in troubled Zimbabwe

• Linage

FIAT DUCATO 2.8D Motorhome 2002, only 15,000 miles. 19 feet long. One owner, fsh. Interior professionally designed from new to personal specification for current disabled owner. One piece molded, fully insulated, double skin body. Requires no maintenance. Hydraulic lift at rear, for full wheelchair access. Large wheel-in toilet, wheelchair storage, swivel front seat 4 berth, blown air heating, awning, oven, grill, 3 way fridge, blinds and flyscreens. All usual motorhome accessories. Suitable for long distance holidays or local journeys. Can send more pictures of inside/outside. £23,500 ono. Must sell. Tel: 01727 860098 (Hertfordshire) or geofffall@albanfm.co.uk

CHAIRMAN ASTRA VAN with Gowings conversion, Red 1.4i, Seats 4 plus wheelchair, 12 months MOT, Ramp 17k miles, M Reg, VGC. £1350 ono. Tel 07979 204972.

TOYOTA COROLLA 1600, auto, 55 reg, 17k miles, Geoff Gosling hand controls Braun Chair Topper. £8,500. Tel: 01977 515520.

Wheelchairs/scooters

LEVO COMPACT G4452 electric, stand-up w/chair. Excellent condition. Cost £4,300. Sell £1,800 ono Tel: 01995 602049 (Preston, Lancs).

BREEZY WHEELCHAIR, FOLDS for car, removable arm rests, foot rests, push or self £125 o.n.o. collection. Tel: 07740 655645 (Northwood, Middx) or mary.messer@tiscali.co.uk

PANTHERA WHEELCHAIR SELF or push, folds, adjustable back, extendable foot rests, Collection. £1,700 new, offers £800 ono Tel: 07740 655645 (Northwood, Middx) or mary.messer@tiscali.co.uk

3 WHEEL WALKER, Maroon, perfect condition, brakes and bag. Collection, £70 ono. Tel: 07740 655645 (Northwood Middx) or mary.messer@tiscali.co.uk

BEATLE-PUMA WHEELCHAIR, 1 year old, £2,000 ono. Buyer collects. Tel: 07721 939939 (NW London).

TGA MYSTERE MOBILITY Scooter, very stable, comfortable, user friendly 4 wheel buggy. Variable speed of 4 & 8 mph. Cost £2,895 new, bought 06.12.05. It is in good condition. Will accept £1,000 ono, a real bargain! Purchaser collects. Tel: 01293 522737 (Crawley, West Sussex).

CRAFTMATIC COMFORT COACH 4-wheel scooter, for road and pavement use, various speed settings, max speed 8 mph. Front and rear lights, indicators, horn, front and rear basket, built-in charger, 20 miles on full charge. Genuine reason for sale, only 6 months' old and used just 3 times, full instruction manual and still under warranty. £2,250 ono. Tel: 01276 474064 (Bagshot, Surrey).

TRAMPER ALL-TERRAIN 4-wheel buggy, excellent legroom, transport trailer, 18 months' old. Cost £5,800, little used, sell £2,000 ono. Tel: 01729 822441 (North Yorkshire).

SELF-PROPELLING LIGHTWEIGHT indoor wheelchair, removable armrests, foot plates, and rear wheels. Cost £580 new, sell £50. Tel: 01729 822441 (North Yorkshire).

Household & Family

STAIRLIFT, STRAIGHT RUN, can be used indoors or out. Remote control, cost £2,000 new, will accept in region of £1,500 ono. To be dismantled and collected. Tel: 07740 655645 (Northwood Middx) or mary.messer@tiscali.co.uk

THERAMATIC BED, TREDELENBERG, complete with mattress and cot sides. £2,000 ono. Buyer collects. Tel: 07721 939939 (NW London).

Property for sale/to let

HOUSE EXCHANGE: I have a 2 bedroomed semi detached bungalow on the outskirts of Lerwick in Shetland and would like to exchange to a similar property anywhere rural in Wales or south west England. This bungalow has a walk in shower in the bathroom, two good-sized bedrooms, both with built in wardrobes, lounge and a 20ft kitchen/diner, it is an older property, but in very good condition. There is lots of storage space. I need a similar property to exchange to, must be ground floor, either a flat or bungalow, and preferably in a rural area. I can walk, so it would not need to be wheelchair accessible. This bungalow is on the edge of a small council estate, which is very quiet and peaceful: Shetland is a very safe place to bring up children, with varied wildlife to be seen. If you drive, nowhere in Lerwick is more than 5 – 10 minutes away. Five minutes in one direction and you are in the town, five minutes in the other direction and you are in the country. Buses run into town every hour, buses are laid on for the local schools and the bus stop is just across the road. Please contact Ingrid Whiley, tel 01595 692131 or e-mail ingrid@red-dragon-wales.com

ISLE OF MAN – 2 miles from Douglas, Purpose built 4 bedroomeed bungalow, 2 bathrooms, 1 ensuite with ceiling hoist to bathroom. Large kitchen/diner, lounge. Wheelchair accessible garden, detached garage, separate store. Local shops and doctor's surgery one mile. £360,000. Further details 01624801565 or ballamoar@manx.net

4 BEDROOM DETACHED house with detached double garage on outskirts of Derby. Additional bedroom and bathroom downstairs extension built for a disabled person. Roof beams suitable for a hoist. Master bedroom with en-suite, lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, main bathroom. For full details or brochure contact Our House, Oakwood, Derby. Tel 01332 666600. Price £240,000.

SEND US YOUR

SMALLS...

and make a big impression. Small ads in DN reach over 60,000 people for just £9 a line. All small ads must be paid for in advance. If you want to advertise, please use the form provided. Send it with a cheque for the total to **Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.**

WARNING

We have been warned about a scam involving people from overseas who say they want to buy a product and who offer to pay using cheques, Western Union money transfers and certified cheques. Although no DN readers to our knowledge have been hit by this, please be particularly wary of accepting cheques from overseas. For more information, visit the Metropolitan Police website.

DN Classified For Sale advertisements

Please use this form if you are a private individual and want to place a classified advertisement (not Personal adverts). Write clearly in block capitals. Remember to allow a space between words. Use each space in the line even if you have to split words at the end.

for sale styles

EXAMPLE OF standard lineage advert. Cost: £9 per line. Tick box below.

EXAMPLE OF

semi-display lineage advert. Cost: £9 per line plus £10. Tick box below.

EXAMPLE OF

box lineage advert. Cost: £9 per line plus £20. Tick box below.

- Standard for sale advert
- Semi-display for sale advert
- Box for sale advert

Choose an advert style from far right. Send this coupon with your name, address, daytime telephone number and a cheque for the total made payable to Disability Now to: 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

DN reserves the right to edit advertisements if necessary. Completion of this form does not guarantee inclusion in a particular issue. Sorry no refunds. DN is a non-profit making newspaper.

DN

disabilitynow

£ 1 . 8 0 June 2 0 0 7



All New Toyota Hiace

- Central Locking
- Metallic Paint
- Electric Windows

From Only £16,450
5Yr Lease From £3,700*

Better by Design

Better for Comfort



VW Prices start from £17,950
5yr lease price starts from £5,411*

VW Cruiser MK III

- Up to 6 Luxury seats as standard
- Front seat comfort pack
- Five door all round access
- Upgraded rear carpet
- Unique interior light system
- Metallic paint as standard*

VW Prices start from £17,950
5yr lease price starts from £5,411*

VW Shuttle SE

- Up to 6 Luxury seats as standard
- Luxury interior
- Five door all round access
- Central locking, dashboard air conditioning and electric windows
- Metallic paint and rear air conditioning as standard*

VW Caravelle

- Top of the range SE and Executive Vehicle specification
- Five door all round access
- Fully flexible seating plans
- Air conditioning as standard
- Metallic paint as standard*

TorSpring Ramp®

- Optional Side or Rear Access Lift
- Optional Front Wheelchair Position
- Rear Ramp & Winch as Standard

TorSpring®

- Optional Side or Rear Access Lift
- Optional Front Wheelchair Position
- Rear Ramp & Winch as Standard

Better for Access



TorSpring Ramp®, Semi High Roof & Lowering Air Suspension Option

Better for Access



Optional Front Wheelchair Position



Optional Side or Rear Access Lift



Better for Choice, Service and Value

VW Caddy Life

Brand new model with Flexi-seat® and TorSpring® ramp as standard. Metallic paint and appearance pack as standard*



Kangoo

With Free Metallic Paint and air conditioning†



Berlingo

With Free Metallic Paint†
Prices start from £12,795
5yr lease price from £2,545*



Shuttle

With Free Metallic Paint and air conditioning†



Offer applies to stock models only *Offers and prices apply to all orders received before 30th June 2007. All details correct at time of print.

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